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"You're Just Taking a Man's Job": A Multi-Level Analysis of Workplace Gender Inequality Experienced by Women Police Officers.

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Sociology

by

Sarah E. Murray

June 2022

Dissertation Committee:
Dr. Sharon S. Oselin, Chairperson
Dr. Ellen Reese
Dr. Randol Contreras

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The Dissertation of Sarah E. Murray is approved:

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Committee Chairperson

University of California, Riverside

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

"You're Just Taking a Man's Job": A Multi-Level Analysis of Workplace Gender Inequality Experienced by Women Police Officers.

by

Sarah E. Murray

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Sociology
University of California, Riverside, June 2022
Dr. Sharon Oselin, Chairperson

It is well-documented that women police officers face a male-dominated workplace and cultural expectations of masculinity among the police. Women officers report unequal pay, stalled career mobility, gendered work assignments, and harassment and discrimination. However, less is known about how structural and cultural factors inform intersectional gender inequality within police agencies. I use Acker's (1990) theory of gendered institutions to illuminate the ways in which police agencies create and perpetuate inequality. This dissertation examines how 20 women officers from two locations within the United States—California and Louisiana—experience and respond to structural and cultural inequality in their workplace. Despite efforts to reduce gender and sexual harassment and discrimination in police organizations in recent decades, participants described ongoing unequal practices at the workplace.

This project provides support for past research on women police officers and advances the literature by considering the role of location in women's experiences and

understanding of workplace gender inequality. While the prevalence of harassment and discrimination was consistent across locations, participants in Louisiana were less likely to criticize the paramilitary structure of policing or respond to harassment and discrimination through formal or legal channels. Women officers of color in the California sample were also more likely to be hired as part of a federally imposed consent decree and to be tasked with unique forms of emotional labor that were not required of their white female colleagues or male colleagues of color. Finally, in line with the tenets of feminist scholarship, I provide policy recommendations to both improve working conditions for women officers and improve access to detailed data on inequality in police organizations for researchers.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Prior to the 1970s, police agencies were dominated by straight, working-class white men (Martin and Jurik 2007). Yet, even today, police work continues to be a male-dominated profession. This is indicated by both the overrepresentation of men at all levels of seniority within police agencies and masculine cultural images of police officers as crime-fighting, aggressive, coercive, and independent (Rabe-Hemp 2018). Although women have increasingly joined police agencies, little has changed in terms of this male and masculine dominance of police agencies and police work (Prokos and Padavic 2002; Remmington 1983). Since the 1970s, women who work in policing have faced many of the same institutional challenges, including sexual harassment, discrimination, and social exclusion. Advances in workplace equity have been slow and challenging for women officers (Martin and Jurik 2007).

Acker (1990) described all organizations as gendered, arguing that gender is a "constitutive element in organizational logic or the underlying assumptions and practices that construct most contemporary work organizations" (154). Although many organizations appear gender-neutral, gender segregation of jobs and tasks and the gender pay gap persist, all of which are created and sustained by organizational practices. Gender scholars have argued that organizations are structured and operated in ways that favor and privilege men and masculinity (Acker 1990; Britton 2000). Using Britton's (2011) typology of gendered organizations, the current study compares the ways in which

police culture, structure, and individual officer agency impact women's experiences of inequality at their workplace.

Previous studies on women police officers identified several avenues of inequality within police departments, including gendered work assignments, lack of promotion or upward mobility, sexual harassment by colleagues or superiors, and social exclusion by male peers (Martin and Jurik 2007; Morash and Haarr 2012; Rabe-Hemp 2018; Remmington 1983). Past research has shown that women in police agencies have reacted to harassment and discrimination by leaving policing, filing official complaints, filing lawsuits, or transferring to another agency (Rabe-Hemp 2018). This study examines how local context and police agencies' culture and structure impact women officers' experiences of racial and sexual identity inequality.

In terms of theoretical contributions, this project extends past research on police officers by examining the diverse experiences of women and focusing on the intersections of gender, race, and sexual identity, which have not been compared across two locations. Feminist criminology calls on researchers to examine all facets of the criminal justice system through a gendered lens (Burgess-Proctor 2006; Daly and Chesney-Lind 1988). Therefore, I focus on women officers, including lesbian women and women of color, both of which are understudied in policing. Based on this research, practical and policy changes related to diversity in police agencies are also suggested by uncovering the ways in which women continue to face inequality within police agencies across the United States. Feminist theories aim to create change through work that has both practical benefits and political importance (DeVault 1999).

This study compares data collected in two locations across the United States and drawn from semi-structured interviews with women police officer with attention paid to diversity of sexual identity and race when recruiting. I used snowball sampling to identify and recruit participants in California and Louisiana. They were asked about their work assignments, entry into policing, differential treatment compared to white male colleagues, and their adaptive responses to discriminatory behavior to understand their experiences of workplace inequality. This study is among the first to qualitatively examine women officers' experiences of department structure, police culture, and individual agency within police agencies.

Gendered Organizations as Sites of Inequality

Occupational gender segregation describes the ways in which certain jobs are dominated by either men or women. This gender segregation relies on and reinforces cultural images of what constitutes men's work and women's work (England 2005). Bielby and Baron (1986) described occupational and job-level gender segregation as both a cause and an outcome of gender inequality in the workplace; accordingly, it represents the main source of gender differences in labor market outcomes. Occupational gender segregation is built into the hierarchy of organizations and sustained by workplace social interactions and gender stereotypes (Bielby and Baron 1986). Bielby and Baron (1986) argued that occupational gender segregation occurs due to statistical discrimination, whereby employers use preconceived notions about group characteristics to evaluate individuals who are members of these groups. Employers treat employees who belong to

these groups differently, even if they produce identical work or display identical aptitudes and abilities (Bielby and Baron 1986).

England (2005) framed explanations of occupational gender segregation as either supply-side (i.e., related to workers) or demand-side (i.e., related to employers). Socialization theory is a supply-side theory that argues that cultural values are both explicitly and implicitly taught to children, which leads to different perspectives, aspirations, and interests among men and women. Therefore, this may explain why more men enter physical or aggressive fields such as firefighting or trial litigation, while women are more likely to enter care or domestic occupations such as elementary education or nursing.

A second supply-side theory described by England is the economics-based human capital theory. To maximize their lifetime earnings, women choose traditionally feminine occupations because these tend to penalize absence from the labor market due to parenthood or care work less than in male-dominated occupations. Conversely, men choose jobs with a lower starting pay, a steep career trajectory, and that tend to offer significant on-the-job training. These factors have allowed workplace gender segregation to persist despite equal opportunities, civil rights legislation, and the higher proportion of women than men who graduate from colleges and universities.

England (2005) also provided a demand-side explanation that reflects discrimination based on adherence to cultural expectations of men and women. Employers discriminate when making personnel decisions; in the process, they rely on arbitrary but culturally supported notions of which jobs suit which gender (England

2005). Like employers, workers hold gendered beliefs about their own work, which may lead to workplace harassment of women in occupations that are considered "men's work." Due to pressure from lawmakers, employers cannot make recruitment decisions based solely on gender; instead, they impose seemingly gender-neutral hiring criteria that actually have a disparate impact according to gender (England 2005).

Employer discrimination can also manifest as what Reskin (1991) called "labor queues," in which employers' ranking of possible workers for any given job dictates hiring practices. Within labor queues, there are gender queues, as employers use gender to rank prospective employees (Reskin 1991). In many occupations, both men and women employers may rank men above women because they see women as a potential liability due to absence from the labor force linked with motherhood (Penner et al 2012). Comparatively, employers may value some women over other women or men for jobs that are considered "women's work" (Reskin 1991).

Similarly, Kanter (1977) described homosocial reproduction, in which those in positions of power identify others who are most similar to them as the best candidates for promotion or hiring. This perpetuates a cycle in which women are excluded from leadership positions and men continue to be overrepresented at high levels of seniority. Conversely, Penner and colleagues (2012) found that, even in cases in which women were part of an organization's leadership, the gender pay gap and gender inequality persisted. Cohen and Huffman (2007) found that the presence of women as managers in male-dominated fields had the most benefit when they reached the highest levels of

leadership. Nevertheless, the inherently gendered practices and policies of organizations are more powerful than the individual actions of women managers.

Among gender scholars, the most common explanation of occupational gender segregation and the gender pay gap is devaluation theory (England 2005). According to the latter, occupations that are defined as men's work and women's work are compensated differently, which also affects men who work in feminized occupations. This is because cultural ideas and beliefs lead to the depreciation of work predominantly performed by women, a lack of equal recognition for the contributions of men and women, and a view of women as less productive than men (England 2005). In other words, women are devalued in society and so is their labor (Cohen and Huffman 2003).

Kanter's theory of tokenism (1977) describes the negative processes that occur among individuals who represent proportional minorities at their workplace. The first element of tokenism is heightened visibility and scrutiny, accompanied by increased performance pressures and limited emotional expression. Moreover, the differences between tokens and dominants are exaggerated, which leads to the further isolation of tokens both from dominants and other tokens. Finally, tokens feel constrained by gendered expectations of behavior, social roles and work roles. These lead to role traps, or control over images of women workers that reflect stereotypes and restrict the identities of women at the workplace (Kanter 1977). Thus, tokenism describes the experiences of women who enter male-dominated occupations.

Organizations and occupations are gendered, "rather than seeing gender only as something that workers bring with them to their jobs, the theory of gendered

organizations argues that gender is already there" (Britton 2011:117). Workers enact gender at work, but the structure of organizations is itself gendered. Acker argued that organizations are gendered because "advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine" (1990:146). When many organizations were founded, white women were not active participants in the paid labor economy, which means that many job ideals inherently disadvantage women (Britton 2000).

Britton described three levels of gendered organizations and occupations: structure, culture, and agency. Structure, the first element of Britton's (2011) theory, describes organizational practices and policies that are based on and reproduce gender inequality. These practices and policies may include explicit exclusionary rules but are more frequently disguised as policies that appear gender-neutral but differentially affect men and women. According to Acker, "understanding how the appearance of gender neutrality is maintained in the face of overwhelming evidence of gendered structures is an important part of analyzing gendered institutions" (Acker 1992:568).

Employers, workers, and clients also draw on images and symbols to determine who should perform a certain job; these cultural images are tied to gender, race, and sexual identity. Ridgeway (2011) argues that both individual and cultural biases permeate workplaces and perpetuate gender inequality because in male-dominated workplaces workers use gender as a basis of commonality and camaraderie which further excludes women. These biases toward one gender over another are manifested in both high and

low stakes actions moving from friend group composition to task assignments ending in promotion and firing decisions.

Finally, individual agency can be defined as an individual's ability to act independently and make choices that benefit them. This element of Britton's (2011) theory describes interactions among workers and between workers and clients—specifically harassment, which may be overt, obvious, and organized or less-organized, more "light-hearted" harassment (e.g., jokes or differential treatment)—that exclude women from tough or unsafe job tasks. The interactions between individual workers may seem trivial, but they are the method through which institutions function, make decisions, and produce cultural images (Acker 1992), including the "doing" of gender (West and Zimmerman 1987). Denissen and Saguy (2014) found that women in the building trades—a field both dominated by men and socially constructed as men's work—encountered harassment from male coworkers, who found their presence threatening to the notion of construction as masculine. It is clear that gendered workplace inequality impacts women, but they also face workplace inequality due to racism and homophobia.

Race and Sexual Identity in Organizations

The simultaneous examination of gender and race and gender and sexual identity requires an intersectional lens. Intersectionality developed from the need to acknowledge women's positions in multiple hierarchies—women of color, working-class women, lesbian women—and to move away from a universal notion of "woman" (Crenshaw 1991). Intersectionality scholars oppose the idea of "identity as a woman or person of

color as an either/or proposition" (Crenshaw 1991:1242). This acknowledgement of multiple positions also includes a desire to incorporate work in multiple areas (e.g., gender and race scholarship) and link previously disparate forms of domination and oppression (Baca Zinn and Dill 1996).

Acker (2006) described inequality regimes as interrelated practices, processes, meanings, and actions that result in gender, sexual identity, and racial inequalities within organizations. Although organizations appear to desegregate based on gender and race, they are instead reconfigured and differentiate tasks and assignments in ways that appear non-discriminatory but still differentially impact women and racial minorities (Acker 2006). When organizations design the general requirements of work, they do so with a white man without children or family demands in mind. Thus, the fundamental construction of work obligations and a standard workday create inequalities between white men and women and people of color (Acker 2006). However, organizational studies largely ignore the intersection of race and gender (Holvino 2010).

Browne and Misra (2003) argued that "labor market experiences reflect experiences of gender that are racialized and social constructions of race that are gendered" (490). Gender and race are both socially constructed categories that produce and maintain social stratification (Browne and Misra 2003). As described by occupational gender segregation, the existence of hierarchies in the workplace benefits white men at the expense of women and people of color. Gender and race wage gaps function together but are neither fully independent nor fully interact (McCall 2001a). In her study of litigators and paralegals, Pierce (1995) described the ways in which gender and race

interact to shape dynamics in law firms. Like police work, law began as a strictly white, male field with formal divisions of labor between men and (white) women. Pierce (1995) found that even the highest-achieving Black women litigators were forced to perform domestic tasks in the workplace. Organizational policy and practice produce racial and gender inequality: “the same job is *not* the same job for male and female legal workers” (Pierce 1995:177).

Aversive racism has been researched in the workplace. It is a term that describes one racial group’s staunch avoidance of interactions with another racial group (Gaertner and Dovidio 1986). This can result in a failure to hire members of other races (Dovidio and Gaertner 2000). Aversive racism is also pernicious, as people who adhere to it often describe themselves as non-racist and claim to rely on egalitarian principles despite the effect being discriminatory. Similarly, racial microaggressions can be described as verbal or non-verbal insults, including code words, that are largely invisible to the perpetrator (McCabe 2009). Due to their imperceptibility to members of the dominant race, microaggressions both communicate racist sentiments and are difficult to prove as intentionally discriminatory.

Racial inequality in pay varies across the United States. It can be explained by Blalock’s (1967) competition theory, which argues that the more people of color—specifically Black workers—in a labor market, the higher the likelihood of discrimination due to competition over scarce resources. This may also reflect a perception by white workers that Black workers are a threat to their employment. Similarly, regions with a large Black population demonstrate higher levels of racial inequality in pay (Huffman

and Cohen 2004). Another regional factor is the role of immigration, specifically in wage disparities between Asian Americans, Latinx people, and whites (McCall 2001). McCall (2001) found support for heightened wage inequality in regions with large immigration populations, with those belonging to the major immigrant group suffering the most.

One of the ways in which women of color experience discrimination at work is through controlling images. For example, common stereotypes of Asian American women include the “Dragon Lady” and the “Lotus Blossom,” which portray Asian women as hypersexualized and treacherous or docile and obedient, respectively (Espiritu 2000). These controlling images form the basis of sexist anti-Asian sentiments and differential treatment. In addition, Latinas are overrepresented in domestic service work, which Wingfield (2007) believed was based on the belief that they are uniquely suited for low-paying work at home. Controlling images of Latinas tend to center around sexual availability, “spiciness,” exoticism, and passion (McCabe 2009).

With regard to African American women, Collins (1990) identified four controlling images: the mammy, the matriarch, the welfare mother, and the jezebel. Black women are caught between expectations of their domestic work and emotional labor both at work and in the home. Collins argued that, “by meshing smoothly with systems of race, class, and gender oppression, [controlling images] provide effective ideological justifications for racial oppression, the politics of gender subordination, and economic exploitation” (1990:271). Wingfield (2007) found evidence of controlling images in the workplace, with the most common stereotype experienced by respondents being Collins’ (2004) concept of the “modern mammy.” Like the mammy, the modern mammy is a

loyal employee to a white boss in the context of the labor economy rather than domestic work. Wingfield reported that Black women are more likely to face unrealistic demands and are expected to accept demeaning treatment more than white and male colleagues.

Some employers prefer Black women as employees over Black men because they view them as less threatening based on the image of the angry Black man (St. Jean and Feagin 1998). However, this preference is based on the belief that women can be controlled through sexual harassment. Stereotype threat describes the risk of feeling as though one confirms racist or sexist stereotypes by acting in a way that aligns with them (Steele and Aronson 1995). People who belong to groups associated with negative stereotypes experience pressure to act in a way that counteracts these stereotypes and experience stress over their identity (Steele and Aronson 1995). In this way, controlling images work not only externally but also internally.

White men seek to exclude African Americans from consideration for prestigious jobs by directing people of color into racialized occupations (Tomaskovic-Devey 1993). According to Collins (1993), this results in Black employees predominantly performing jobs that involve interactions with the Black community or Black clients. These racialized jobs are also created through the entrance of African Americans, as evidence shows that the number of Black employees corresponds with a reduction in earnings for a position (Tomaskovic-Devey 1993). Maume Jr. (1999) borrowed Williams' (1992) image of the glass escalator, which describes the ways in which women are unable to achieve leadership in male-dominated fields, to illustrate the experiences of Black workers. Both

African American men and women experienced barriers to entry for managerial positions.

In addition, sexual identity continues to an understudied area within organizations. Ward and Winstanley (2005) argued that this is due to the invisible nature of sexual identity, compared to race or gender. Yet, like race and gender, sexual identity is a basis of unequal treatment and workplace harassment (Woods and Lucas 1993). Some gay and lesbian workers may choose occupations or sectors that may be more accepting of their sexual identity and thus limit their potential earnings, although evidence on this is mixed (Klawitter and Flatt 1998). Klawitter and Flatt (1998) found that, same-sex couples were more educated than mixed-sex couples; for lesbian couples, this finding may reflect a lower interest in child rearing or a stronger commitment to the labor market than heterosexual women. In terms of earnings, gay men earn significantly less than straight married men, but lesbian women tend to earn more than straight married women (Klawitter and Flatt 1998). Few differences in these earnings were found between areas with and without antidiscrimination policies (Klawitter and Flatt 1998).

Coming out at work is a major issue faced by gay and lesbian workers. Humphrey (1999) provided three reasons why people may decide to come out at work. First, some employees may feel it is important to educate their straight colleagues about sexual minorities. Second, they may respond to an internal desire for honesty and disclose their orientation. Finally, there are benefits to building open relationships at work. Disclosing one’s sexual identity makes one vulnerable to rejection and retaliation, but remaining closeted results in lower life satisfaction and mental well-being (Griffith and Hebl 2002).

Day and Schoenrade (1997) found that coming out at the workplace is linked to positive work attitudes. Conversely, Griffith and Hebl (2002) noted that both increased job satisfaction and heightened job anxiety corresponded to workplace disclosure.

Denissen and Saguy (2014) described the experiences of gay and straight women in the male-dominated building trades. In response to perceived threats to their male work, tradesmen both labeled their female colleagues as lesbians (therefore limiting their womanness) and generally hypersexualized women (Denissen and Saguy 2014). They were also likely to conflate occupational competence with lesbianism, where both are considered signs of gender nonconformity. Although tradeswomen may initially find this to be a liberation from expectations of femininity, homophobia results in hostility from male colleagues. Even among lesbian women who feel like "one of the guys," women may be forced to participate in the misogynistic work culture (Denissen and Saguy 2014:390). Male colleagues routinely demand higher and exaggerated standards of masculinity from lesbian colleagues as a way to prove themselves.

Women in Police Agencies

In the 19th century, women began to work in police agencies as matrons. Their duties involved the care and confinement of women and children at police stations (Britton 2011). The gender segregation of women in police work based on views of appropriate "women's work" continued into the 20th century and the advent of "policewomen" whose uniforms included skirts and high heels and whose main role resembled social work (Martin and Jurik 2007). Policewomen largely addressed moral

offenses, monitoring child labor law violations and sex trafficking. Although they had some power, many policewomen could not make arrests, carry a gun, or work on the same team as their male colleagues into the 1950s (Britton 2011; Martin and Jurik 2007; Rabe-Hemp 2018).

It was only after 1970 that women began working as full police officers and entered police work in record numbers (Miller et al 2003). Although many women officers and the associations that they created lobbied decades earlier for the full inclusion of women in all police departments and agencies, agencies did not accept women into their ranks until they were compelled by law to do so (Rabe-Hemp 2018). This unprecedented increase in hiring followed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the adoption of Title IX, and the formation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (Miller et al 2003; Rabe-Hemp 2018). Consent decrees were another measure that enabled women and people of color to access police work based on judicial compliance (Martin and Jurik 2007). Under these consent decrees, which began in the 1980s and often followed lawsuits by women and racial minorities, many police departments that served over 50,000 residents were required to increase their hiring and retention of women and people of color (Rabe-Hemp 2018). Women applicants faced overt and covert discrimination in police agencies; they were required to have a higher level of education than male applicants (a bachelor's degree rather than a high school diploma) and undergo physical agility tests that included a heavy emphasis on upper body strength and activities that were never encountered in the field. Prokos and Padavic (2002) conducted undercover ethnographic observations of a police academy course and found that both

overt and covert discrimination acted as a deterrent and a barrier to women entering police work.

Today, women represent approximately 12% of all sworn officers and 10% of first-line supervisory roles. Sworn officers are full officers who are expected to perform patrols or investigative duties and are issued a firearm (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2021). However, the Uniform Crime Report found that women are overrepresented among full-time, non-sworn "civilian" officers, which reflects occupational sex segregation and the view that clerical work should be performed by women (Britton 2011). The number of women in policing had slowly increased since the 1980s but plateaued after 2010 (Rabe-Hemp 2018).

Women in Police Agencies: Theories and Research

Research and theories about women in police agencies can be largely categorized into three major areas, which I term *either/or*, the *benefits of women*, and *doing gender/doing police work*.

Either/Or

The *either/or* category was developed first and is based on the ground-breaking work of Martin (1980), which led to her typology of POLICEwomen and policeWOMEN. This theory builds on Kanter's theory of tokenism; it identifies how women officers experience conflict between sex roles and the masculine image and paramilitary demands of police work (Martin 1980). When women began to enter police

agencies in larger numbers in the 1970s, they were met with outright hostility from male colleagues who believed that police work was a distinctly male profession and that the inclusion of women would disrupt their group solidarity and lower their occupation's prestige (Rabe-Hemp 2018; Remmington 1983). Martin (1980) also found that women are less likely to associate with other women in male-dominated environments and instead seek to elevate themselves by disassociating themselves from other women's undesirable behaviors or identities. Kaiser and Spalding (2015) found that women managers who identified first as a police officer and second as a woman were likely to conform to the sexist logic of their workplace by excluding lower-level women from promotion and socialization opportunities.

The underlying assumption of these theories is that women are not accepted or viewed as police peers by male colleagues but rather based on their gender identity. In the 1970s and 1980s, women were still sex-segregated within police departments; women officers were overrepresented in roles related to victims, women, and children and underrepresented in roles traditionally viewed as masculine, such as special weapons and tactics (SWAT) teams or motorcycle units (Weisheit 1987). Hunt (1984) found that women were largely absent from more prestigious and desirable job assignments with opportunities for additional pay, less direct supervision and more autonomy, a release from the obligation to answer service calls, and the ability to avoid wearing a uniform; in addition, such assignments were most likely to lead to promotion opportunities (Martin and Jurik 2007). Despite these contributions, this body of research glossed over the ways

in which women challenged prescribed notions of femininity within this male-dominated occupation and transgressed gender stereotypes (Remmington 1983).

Benefits of Women

The second category, the *benefits of women*, describes a new line of research that corresponded to a rise in the adoption of community policing in the 1990s. There is no agreed-upon definition of community policing (Rosenberg 2008), but it is regularly implemented based on the assumption that it effectively reduces tensions between police and the public by increasing accountability and attention to community concerns, improving public relations, and shifting toward crime prevention rather than fighting crime (Rabe-Hemp 2018). Some scholars have argued that the implementation of community policing benefitted women, as the feminine traits associated with women officers came to be seen as an asset under the new system (Miller 1999). According to Miller (1999), women officers believed that they were better able to de-escalate violent situations, engage with community members as equals, and demonstrated stronger communication skills overall than their male counterparts.

It is important to note that women and people of color in police agencies were more accepting of community policing tactics than their white male colleagues (Rabe-Hemp 2018). White male officers largely avoided roles that required community policing involvement, claiming that their role was law enforcement rather than social work (Miller 1999). As a result, the success of community policing is jeopardized by its classification as soft and “women’s work” by male officers. Alongside community policing, a parallel

trend is the militarization of policing (Kraska 2007). The growing militarization of policing and “zero tolerance” policing was popularized by the New York Police Department and its success with “stop and frisk” practices, which have since been found unconstitutional (Epp et al 2014; Rabe-Hemp 2018). These competing trends appear to have enabled the continued sex segregation of men and women officers.

Doing Gender/Doing Police Work

The final and most recent category, *doing gender/doing police work*, is based on West and Zimmerman’s (1987) seminal paper, which outlined the ways in which actors in society routinely achieve gender through the demonstration of appropriate or discordant gendered behavior. Although gender is a social construct, actors face real consequences for their choices in the accomplishment of gender (West and Zimmerman 1987). Studies that adopted this framework have analyzed the ways in which women officers contest and challenge male dominance in their profession and gender-based expectations of their own work: simultaneously doing gender and police work (Chan et al 2010; Garcia 2003; Morash and Haarr 2012; Rabe-Hemp 2009). Research has exposed women officers’ views of their distinctive characteristics and display of positive occupational identities that are not based on gender stereotypes (Morash and Haarr 2012; Rabe-Hemp 2009). However, these women officers still faced barriers due to their gender, including repeated failed attempts at promotion, discrimination by coworkers, and rejection by male mentors (Morash and Haarr 2012). It is clear that, although women continue to pursue police work and resist harassment and discrimination at work, police

agencies are not gender-equal workplaces. Little remains known about how workplace gender inequality in policing uniquely impacts lesbian women and women of color.

Inequalities in Police Agencies Based on Race and Sexual Identity

Sexual identity is an important vector of privilege and oppression and should be examined in relation to police work, as "police culture typically embraces symbols of aggressive masculinity, such as toughness and physical strength, which are reinforced by practices that also confirm an officer's heterosexual status" (Miller, Forest and Jurik 2003:365). Gay men are devalued because of homophobia and the perception of gay men as feminine, but lesbians may derive some benefits in certain contexts because of their perceived masculinity compared to gay men and straight women (Denissen and Saguy 2014). Miller et al. (2003) found that heterosexual male officers were more accepting of lesbian coworkers than gay male coworkers. However, some gay men's ability to pass as the hegemonic masculine ideal if they remain "closeted" and do not discuss or divulge their sexual orientation can be beneficial to their career, whereas lesbians are still women (and thus considered lesser) even if they remain closeted. Miller et al. (2003) found that discrimination based on sexism was more difficult to overcome than heterosexism for lesbian officers. Lesbian officers reported feeling solidarity with straight women colleagues based on thwarted promotion opportunities, sexism, and the inability to conform to masculine ideals of police or the "old boys' club" (366).

Workers with marginalized identities redefine themselves and their work to internally resist charges of incompetence leveled at them by coworkers. Myers, Forest,

and Miller (2004) found that both gay male officers and lesbian female officers scored higher on scales of masculine behavior than their heterosexual male coworkers. Furthermore, lesbian officers were likely to report both traditional masculine police behaviors and less traditional and masculine behaviors at work, which suggests more than a simple dichotomy between two types of policing and doing gender at work. Many respondents also felt that their position as both gay people and police officers improved their police work, specifically when interacting with marginalized groups and in tasks that require compassion (Myers et al 2004). This belief about one's unique ability to connect with marginalized groups is also true of women in police agencies (Garcia 2003).

Many police agencies have been—and continue to be—overwhelmingly white, especially among high-ranking officers (Bolton and Feagin 2004). Systemic racism acts in much the same way as gender inequality by excluding people of color from police work or keeping them in the lower ranks and out of beneficial social groups in police agencies (Bolton and Feagin 2004). Racism in police agencies also manifests as unequal hiring practices and both casual and overt racist language during training, patrol, and unstructured time (Bolton and Feagin 2004). In particular, Black and Latinx officers must confront the racially biased training and attitudes of fellow officers, which are aimed at both the public and the officers themselves (Bolton and Feagin 2004; Carter 1986). Holdaway (2010) asserted that police culture "is not just enacted within private police territory, the police station, for example, but informs both relationships within exclusively police contexts as well as relationships with the public" (86). Officers of color have expressed fear that their career may be damaged if they report or speak out

against their own racist treatment by colleagues and the treatment of civilians of color by other officers (Cashmore 2010). Officers of color are also subject to the effects of tokenism (e.g., heightened visibility), which makes the reporting of misconduct even more difficult (Cashmore 2010; Texeira 2002).

The similarities between race and gender are salient to the experiences of women police officers. However, Black women officers have been ignored in research for decades, fitting into neither literature on Black men in policing nor white women (Haarr 1997). Pike (1991) suggested that the presence of Black women was met with greater hostility from colleagues than the presence of Black men because they challenged both the racial and gendered image of policing. Similarly, Martin (1994) found that Black men and women officers were pitted against each other in police agencies, as Black male officers were more likely to adopt coworker's sexist attitudes toward their women coworkers. Black women were also treated differently than their white women counterparts, as they were not "put on a pedestal"—that is, idealized as physically frail and in need of protection (Martin 1994:390).

Historically, police agencies have discriminated against Black officers in three ways. First, Black officers were limited to patrol duties without promotion possibilities or prestigious assignments. Second, police agencies only assigned Black officers to police Black neighborhoods, or Black and Latinx officers were predominantly assigned to high-crime and high-risk areas, which led to more workplace stress and danger (Palmiotto et al 2006). Finally, police agencies assigned Black officers to only work with other officers of color, which amounted to a racial segregation practice (Palmiotto et al 2006). Moreover,

Texeira (2002) described three ways in which sexual harassment uniquely affects Black women police officers. First, Black women experience sexual harassment more frequently than white women. Qualitative differences in sexual harassment are also important, as they reflect differences in cultural images of Black women and their experiences of employment. African American women are also more vulnerable to sexual harassment than white women due to historical stereotypes of Black women as sexually promiscuous. Third, white men carry "salient external master status" (Kanter 1977:966), whereby they experience the same benefits at work as they do beyond police work; conversely, Black women are treated the same way at work as they are outside of work, which reflects a doubly oppressed identity (Texeira 2002). In addition, Carmen and colleagues (2007) found that Black women officers reported experiencing racism on the job more often than sexism and a desire for solidarity with Black male officers more than a desire for solidarity with other women on the job.

Continued research on Latinx police officers is vital, as the Latinx community is the fastest-growing racial category in the United States and Latinx people are projected to represent a majority of Americans by 2044 (Census Bureau 2015). Latinx officers face unique challenges in policing Latinx immigrant communities, as many are second- or third-generation immigrants who have assimilated to the United States. In addition, due to changes in immigration trends over time, they now work with a much more diverse community than in the past (Irlbeck 2008). Latinx officers are more likely to identify with Latinx members of the public while on duty if they grew up in a Latinx community, regardless of other factors such as bilingualism, whether one or both parents are Latinx,

and generational status (Irlbeck 2008). Del Carmen et al. (2007) found that Latina officers have different attitudes than white and African American women officers; they prefer to work with male partners, report little or no workplace harassment, and low work-related stress. The authors suggested that this may be related to cultural values held by Latina officers, but too few studies have examined Latina police officers to substantiate this claim.

Moreover, very few studies have included or discussed the experiences of Asian officers, and those that have are overwhelmingly based in the United Kingdom. Holdaway (1997) examined the experiences of Black and Asian police officers in England; however, his sample of Asian officers only included South Asian officers. By comparing the experiences of these two groups, Holdaway found that the results were consistent with other studies on racial minorities in policing; notably, the two racial groups tended to be pitted against one another. Holder and colleagues (1999) interviewed three Asian woman officers as part of a larger study of Black and Asian officers in England and Wales. Two out of three Asian respondents experienced discrimination based on both racism and sexism. Unsurprisingly, they also found that Black and Asian woman officers were more likely to experience harassment and discrimination overall and sexual harassment than their white women counterparts (Holder et al 1999). While women in policing is an understudied area, variations among these women, including race and sexual identity, are even more understudied. Therefore, the current project aims to examine women police officers' different experiences of workplace gender inequality in an intersectional manner.

Outline of the Dissertation

This chapter framed the current thesis in relation to existing literature and understudied aspects of workplace gender inequality in police agencies. I first situate this project using the theory of gendered institutions, then focus on women, people of color, and gay and lesbian people in policing. This review demonstrated that police agencies continue to be predominantly male, white, and heterosexist organizations that perpetuate forms of inequality. I also present this dissertation's unique contributions, which provide novel insights on women officers' experiences of structural and cultural gender inequality in police organizations and the ways in which they respond to this differential treatment at work.

In Chapter Two, I present my methodological approach to this project. I discuss my sampling strategy, data collection and analysis, and provide demographic details on the study participants. Moreover, I consider how the regional labor market and cultural context of each sampling location shaped the study. Finally, I examine the ways in which my positionality shaped my research orientation and attitude toward participants.

Chapter Three provides an overview of the history of women at work in policing to frame the examination of the structural forms of gender inequality inherent to police agencies. Despite the number of existing articles on gender inequality in police organizations, there is a dearth of research on the structure of police agencies in general and the ways in which it shapes this inequality more specifically. I find that, although it appears to be gender-neutral, the paramilitary structure of police agencies has an overwhelmingly negative effect on women, who predominantly occupy positions of low

status and power. I also highlight the three main channels through which participants in the sample entered police work: the preference for veterans in hiring, a familial connection to a police officer, or hiring by an agency that sought to diversify under a federal consent decree. Participants also explained how police academies and field training programs served as sites of hazing and introduction to the masculinist environment of police agencies.

In Chapter Four, the role of police culture in maintaining workplace gender inequality is examined. The study corroborates past findings and presents new results on the different experiences of participants who worked in sheriff's departments and police departments. I also find that women officers of color were asked to perform unique forms of emotional labor that were not expected of male officers of color or white women officers. While past studies have considered the ways in which being police work impacts a woman's approach to motherhood, I also find that the latter impacts her approach to police work.

Chapter Five outlines women officers' responses to harassment and discrimination at work. I first review the prevalence and severity of gender harassment and sexual harassment and discrimination, highlighting the finding that women in male-dominated workplaces are at higher risk of these experiences than women in other sectors. Participants responded to harassment and discrimination in three main ways: informal actions, transferring to other agencies, and filing an official report or a lawsuit (by far the least common). Women officers in Louisiana were more likely to pursue informal actions, while participants in California were more likely to file an official

complaint or a lawsuit. Moreover, participants in both locations were equally likely to move to another agency. I conclude the chapter by highlighting ways in which these responses helped and harmed individual women as well as their effects on the collective.

Finally, the conclusion summarizes the dissertation's main contributions in relation to the extant literature. I also discuss the significance of this research topic and provide suggestions for fostering greater equity in police agencies. Finally, I outline the limitations of the current study and related areas that could be explored in future research.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODS

Introduction

In the past, there have been qualitative studies of women police officers and gender inequality amongst police officers (Corsianos 2009; Hunt 1990; Martin 1980; Martin and Jurik 2007; Miller 1999; Rabe-Hemp 2008, 2009, 2019; Schultz 2004). However, there has not been a systematic qualitative analysis of women officers' experiences of workplace gender inequality at the structural, cultural, and agency levels. This chapter contextualizes the two sample sites in relation to each other and outlines the procedures used for gaining entry, data collection, and data analysis. In this study, I conducted a multi-site comparative qualitative study of women police officers in California and Louisiana. These sites were selected based on differences in political orientation, population size, and racial demographic data. Both states also employ enough women police officers to support recruitment; in each case, I used snowball sampling with an existing contact in the area who acted as a gatekeeper. I drew on in-depth, semi-structured interviews with a sample of 10 women in each location. All participants were either currently employed as a police officer or had retired within the past five years. The total sample size was lower than expected, which I believe was partly based on the "Blue Lives Matter" movement and the accompanying political polarization of police.

I partly based my research design on the work of Cara Rabe-Hemp (2008, 2009, 2018). Rabe-Hemp conducted semi-structured qualitative interviews with 24 to 38 women police officers in the Midwest on topics related to gender and police work. She also used snowball sampling to recruit participants who worked as state, county,

municipal, and campus police officers and did not seek police agency cooperation for her projects (Rabe-Hemp 2008). These studies have laid groundwork for tested methods of entry and data collection (Rabe-Hemp 2007, 2009, 2018). In the current study, I employed these tested approaches in novel locations with a more racially diverse sample and at three levels of analysis.

Context

Population Demographics

I recruited participants from a major Californian city and its surrounding area and a relatively large city in Louisiana and its surrounding area, as both locations featured a substantial number of women police officers and racial/ethnic variation. These locales also differed in important ways—most notably, in political affiliation—that I anticipated would lead to differences in experiences between the two sites. California is home to approximately 39.5 million people, of whom 50.2% are female (Census Bureau 2021). Although many Latinx people would consider that identity to be a race, the United States Census Bureau categorizes "Hispanic" and "non-Hispanic" as separate ethnic groups (Census Bureau 2021). In California, approximately 24 million residents identify as non-Hispanic, while 15.5 million identify as Hispanic. White/Caucasian is the largest racial group, at approximately 28 million people (72%). Within this group, approximately half (14 million) identify as white and Hispanic (Census Bureau 2021). The next largest racial group is Asian/Asian American at 6.1 million people (15% of the population), followed by Black/African American at 2.6 million (6% of residents) and "Two or more races" at

1.6 million residents (4% of the population). The two most populated areas are the San Francisco Bay Area, which comprises nine counties and approximately 7.5 million people, and the Greater Los Angeles area, which includes five counties and 18.7 million people; the latter is the largest population center in California and the second-largest population center in the United States (Census Bureau 2021).

In contrast, Louisiana is considerably smaller than California. It has 4.6 million residents, 51.2% of whom are women (Census Bureau 2021). In terms of ethnicity, far fewer people who identify as Hispanic live in Louisiana. More than 4.4 million residents (95%) identify as non-Hispanic (Census Bureau 2021). As in California, the largest racial group is white, at 2.9 million people (63%); within this group, only around 200,000 identify as Hispanic and white. Black/African American is the next largest racial group at approximately 1.5 million people (33%), followed by Asian/Asian American and "Two or more races" at 84,000 (2% of the population) and 82,000 (1.8% of the population), respectively (Census Bureau 2021). The two largest population centers are the New Orleans metropolitan area, which encompasses 1.3 million residents and eight parishes, and the state capital, Baton Rouge and the surrounding area, which comprises nine parishes and 870,000 people (Census Bureau 2021). Both Louisiana and California have a median age of around 38 years (Census Bureau 2021).

The two locations included in the sample also differed in terms of political culture. Especially in major cities, California is a strongly Democratic state (Hirschhorn 2016). Approximately half (46.5%) of all registered voters in California are Democrats (Baldassare et al 2021). Meanwhile, Louisiana has historically voted Democrat due to its

large African American population; more recently, however, it has become a majority Republican state (Swenson 2016). In Louisiana, 39.9% of all registered voters are Democrats, while 33.3% are Republicans (Louisiana Secretary of State 2022).

Police Agencies and Local Labor Markets

In an analysis of regional labor markets, McCall (2001b) found that, compared to white women, racial and gender pay inequality in metropolitan areas was strongly impacted by immigration for Asian American and Latina women in particular. When considering pay inequality between white and Black women, the structure of local industry was the most important factor in differences in pay (McCall 2001b). It is important to analyze the racial and gender composition of each labor market, as this drives local competition and discrimination in hiring in fields such as policing, which largely recruit locally (Huffman and Cohen 2004). Thus, there are greater variations in experiences of workplace inequality in regional labor markets than in national labor markets.

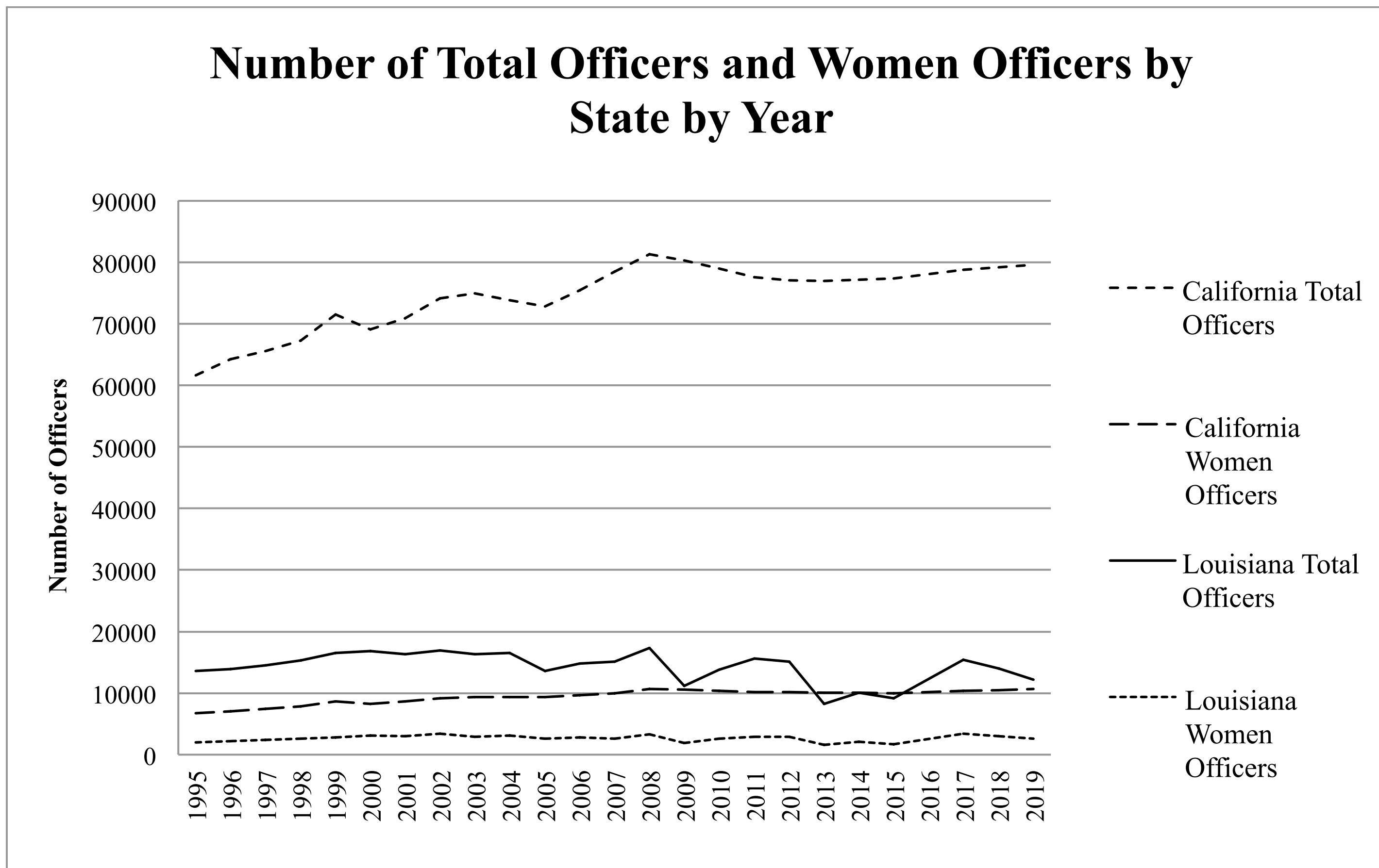
Indeed, the realities of workers in California and Louisiana are markedly different. For example, the median household income is $80,400 in California and $51,000 in Louisiana (Census Bureau 2021). The two states also have markedly different costs of living; California has the third highest cost of living in the United States, with a cost of living index of 142.2 (MERIC 2022), while Louisiana has a cost of living index of 93 and the 33rd highest cost of living in the country (MERIC 2022). In terms of unemployment rates, California ranks 39th in the nation with an unemployment rate of

4.1, while Louisiana ranks 44th with an unemployment rate of 4.6 (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2022). These disparities play a key part in differences between these two locations.

In addition, I chose these states based on differences between their police agencies and the number of police officers. California employs 78,740 sworn officers, of which 10,702 are women (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2020). The state contains 469 police agencies and has a civilian-to-police ratio of 502:1 (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2020). Officers in California are paid a mean wage of $49.48 per hour and an annual mean salary of $102,920 (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2021). In Louisiana, the civilian-to-police ratio is 298:1, one of the highest in the nation. In total, 182 police agencies employ 15,418 sworn officers, 3,414 of whom are women (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2020). In Louisiana, the mean wage for police officers is $21.53 per hour and the annual mean salary is $44,790 (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2021).

Nationally, 83.3% of all police officers identify as white, 11.5% as Black, 1.6% as Asian American, and 14.6% as Latinx (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2021). However, there is limited data on police officers' race by state. Therefore, I included data on the racial composition of police agencies in the two largest cities in each state; it is not representative of the entire state, as agencies in cities tend to be largest and most diverse. For example, police agencies in cities of over 1 million residents employ the highest percentage of Latino (21%) and Latina (5%) officers (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2019). Police agencies that serve communities of over 250,000 residents are the most likely to be racially diverse (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2019).

Graph 1 – Number of Total Officers and Women Officers by State (California and Louisiana) by Year (1995-2019)



Graph 2 Women Officers as a Percentage of Total Officers by State (California and Louisiana) by Year (1995-2019)

The racial composition of police officers who work in the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) is 44.6% white, 34.1% Latinx, 11.2% Black, and 9.6% Asian American. In northern California, the San Francisco Police Department is 46% white, 19% Latinx, 18% Asian American, and 9% Black (San Francisco Police 2022). The New Orleans Police Department employs more Black officers than white officers (59% and 35%, respectively). However, only 4% of officers were Latinx and 1% were Asian American (New Orleans Police Department 2021). Although most of the Baton Rouge population is Black, only 30% of sworn officers in the Baton Rouge Police Department

(BRPD) are African American (Mustian 2017). This makes Baton Rouge one of only six cities in the United States with a majority Black population but a majority white police force (Mustian 2017).

"Blue Lives Matter" and the Shifting Cultural Context of Policing

In the fall of 2018, I arrived at the home of the third participant to be interviewed. It was a modest and well-kempt bungalow in a once-small city in California, which now filled with people who had been priced out of a nearby larger city. As I parked my car and walked toward the front door, I noticed a small rectangular fabric banner that hung from a metal pole stuck in a flowerbed. The banner showed a mostly black and white American flag with a single, vivid blue stripe horizontally cutting through the middle. I had seen this flag before as part of a white supremacist demonstration on the other side of the country, but I had never encountered it outside of someone's home. Although this was the first time that I encountered a "Blue Lives Matter" flag in my field research, it would not be the last. In total, I counted seven Blue Lives Matter symbols in interviews: three as car window decals, two as home or yard décor, and two on apparel.

The Blue Lives Matter movement emerged as one of several responses to the Black Lives Matter movement and the accompanying public outcry over racially motivated police violence (Mason 2022). Black Lives Matter has since become a scapegoat for Republican politicians, who have categorized it as an anti-white hate group (Mason 2022). According to these conservatives, the police are under attack in the United States and are targeted by Black residents for "assassination" (Blake 2017). What these

politicians fail to acknowledge is the prevalence of white supremacist sympathy among police officers. In a 2006 report, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) described the infiltration of white supremacist groups and their sympathizers into law enforcement as a major concern. Since then, there has been no publicly released data on the prevalence of white supremacists in police agencies, except the FBI's discovery of active ties between these groups and police officers as recently as 2015 (Speri 2017). These connections have led some scholars to assert that Blue Lives Matter is a thinly veiled endorsement of white supremacy and ongoing oppression by police (Mason 2022).

The Blue Lives Matter movement has deep ties to Louisiana, which in 2016 became the first state to extend hate crime laws to cover acts based on "actual or perceived employment as a law enforcement officer or firefighter" (Mason 2022; Olson 2017). Since 2016, three other states—Kentucky, Mississippi, and Texas—have enacted similar "Blue Hate Crime laws" (Mason 2022; Olson 2017). Hate crime laws were originally created to identify and punish crimes motivated by racism, homophobia, and other forms of bigotry (Perry 2001). Blue Hate Crime laws subverted this intention to protect people from violence based on immutable aspects of their identity (Mason 2022). Mason argued, "Blue Hate Crime laws contain an implicit attempt to destabilize contemporary narratives of blue on Black maltreatment by insinuating the real victims in this cultural crossfire are police and the real assailants are Black" (2022:425). By categorizing police officers as a special class of victims, lawmakers argued that they deserved extra protection under the law (Mason 2022). As Olson explained, "Law enforcement officers are not a marginalized group, nor have they experienced a history of

prejudice, discrimination, or systematic violence" (2017:16). While some officers may belong to groups protected under hate crime laws, extending these protections to a voluntary occupation that one may leave at any time is especially problematic.

I present this emergent theme to demonstrate the ways in which divisive "us versus them" rhetoric made my research more difficult. Potential participants were more distrustful of me than I had previously experienced; this is also true in informal conversations with colleagues while attempting to recruit police officers. In many cases, I had to explicitly state—sometimes more than once—that I was not studying race and policing or how police officers interact with residents to secure participants for the interviews. This was especially true in the Louisiana sample, a state with explicit Blue Hate Crime laws and an overwhelmingly white sample. Given continued political divisiveness in the United States, it will be interesting to see how recruitment for future projects will be affected.

Gaining Access

Women are underrepresented in police agencies across the United States, including the chosen locations. Thus, recruitment was a challenge. Police officers are also known to be distrustful, reticent with researchers, and avoid discussion of their work (Horn 1997; Leo 2001). Officers may view researchers as outsiders who seek to gain information that can be used to disparage their profession (Horn 1997), and the increased political polarization of violent police and citizen interactions has only exacerbated this dynamic. To overcome this distrust, I relied on a trusted insider from a past study to

introduce me to two new gatekeepers (one in each sample location) to generate an initial list of contacts for possible participation. These informal gatekeepers helped me to recruit participants by sharing my information with their networks and endorsing my legitimacy to potential participants, thereby providing me with "social access" (Cassell 1988). Despite these efforts to gain entry and develop a rapport, the final number of participants was lower than expected due to multiple impasses in recruitment. These impasses largely consisted of referred officers refusing invitations to participate in an interview (or failing to respond to multiple attempts at contact), interviewees claiming that they did not know anyone to refer to the study, and women who initially agreed to be interviewed but then either repeatedly did not show or could not agree on a time to be interviewed. Although challenges in recruitment occur in all forms of research, I suspect that increased police distrust of researchers affected this study in particular.

The gatekeepers were both recently retired white women who had worked as police officers for over 20 years. They were chosen based on their willingness to assist with the project and based on a recommendation from an existing police contact. This entailed certain limitations for recruitment, as retired officers do not have daily contact with other officers and members of their social circle also tend to be retired. This is partly why the sample in both locations skewed older than average in police agencies. In this study, I relied on "informal" or "external" gatekeepers for two reasons (Ortiz 2004; Reeves 2010). First, the process of gaining formal approval by police agencies is time-consuming and would likely require me to make compromises to the research project, such as avoiding certain topics and only speaking to certain people. Second, obtaining

formal approval and contacting women officers through their workplace may reduce the likelihood that they would be open about sensitive topics due to the belief that I am affiliated with the agency. By avoiding institutional support through a police agency, participants were assured that none of their answers, even in aggregate, would be shared with their employer or colleagues. This may be a concern, especially around issues of harassment and discrimination.

Snowball sampling enables some level of rapport between the interviewer and the participant based on a shared contact (Weiss 1994). However, the participant's answers and behavior may also be affected by the shared contact, depending on the relationship between the intermediary and the respondent (Weiss 1994). To mitigate this, I reminded participants at the beginning of each interview that participation was strictly voluntary and that any information that they provided would not be shared with anyone in the study, including the person who referred them.

Sampling was also purposive with regard to diversity of age, sexual identity, and race among the participants. However, this purposive sampling was limited by the use of snowball sampling, as many participants referred people who were demographically similar to themselves in age and race. This led to both samples skewing older than expected and a racially homogenous sample in Louisiana. Participants could occupy any rank of sworn officer within a police agency, although attention was paid to recruiting women with varying ranks and tenures. Finally, participants had to either be current officers or recently retired (within the past five years) to facilitate the recall of specific incidents and experiences.

A total of 20 participants (10 from each region) were ultimately recruited to the study. In total, 31 people were contacted, but 11 either declined to participate or failed to respond to further communication. When I began this research project, I intended to have a higher number of participants. However, I struggled to recruit participants despite the use of gatekeepers. One reason for this was a loss of funding during the data collection, which resulted in delays in follow-up visits to the sampling locations. I also encountered numerous impasses and potential participants who repeatedly did not show or rescheduled at the last minute. The issue of follow-through on the part of participants is a known challenge in qualitative interviewing (Warren 2011). As discussed in the above section, I also suspect that growing political polarization and distrust on the part of police officers contributed to challenges in recruitment. Finally, recruitment ceased entirely with the COVID-19 pandemic, as I could no longer travel or meet participants in person. While many researchers successfully pivoted to video calls and telephone interviews, I believe that the combination of older participants' lack of familiarity with new technology and the emergency deployment of currently employed participants prevented this transition in my own research.

Data and Procedures

The data was generated through semi-structured interviews with participants. Semi-structured interviews allow officers to describe their experiences, thought processes, and feelings surrounding events in their career in their own words (Brinkmann 2013). Therefore, interviews are an appropriate method for examining officers'

experiences of working in police agencies. The interviews took place in a location of the participant's choice to reduce any potential power imbalance between the researcher and the participant and to signal respect for the participant's time, in accordance with feminist methodology tenets (DeVault 1999). Due to my lack of affiliation with any police agencies, the interviews could not take place on agency property or while the participant was in uniform. Participants overwhelmingly selected either their home or a local coffee shop or restaurant for the interview. Two participants were interviewed in the living room of the rented accommodation that I stayed at during the data collection stage, and one participant asked to be interviewed in her car during her lunch break from her post-retirement, non-law enforcement job. Participants were not compensated for their time or monetarily incentivized to participate.

Drawing on questions and practices previously used in a study that examined men and women officers' perceptions of structure and agency in their department, I created core questions based on topics of interest to the study and allowed room for follow-up questions or pivoting into unanticipated areas related to the study. The interviews lasted between 45 minutes and two hours. Before the interviews, I asked each participant for their permission to record audio. Three participants declined to be recorded, and two audio files were corrupted. In the latter cases, I analyzed the detailed notes that I created during and immediately after the interview instead of the transcripts. Prior to the interviews, I also asked participants to complete a demographics sheet, which asked for their age, race, sexual identity, relationship status, highest level of education achieved,

rank, tenure in law enforcement, and whether they were a parent. Those who identified as parents were also asked how many children they had and their ages.

Once the interviews began, participants were first asked about their entry into police work, including their impetus for joining: any initial police contacts; any recruitment techniques; the application, interview, and hiring process; and any training or mentorship that they received upon joining. Then, the questions focused on their views of their agency in particular, how they perceived the professional culture, the paramilitary structure, and their ability to make their own decisions or "be themselves" at work. Follow-up questions in each of these areas were intended to determine whether gender, sexual identity, or race impacted participants' workplace experiences. I then asked about their interactions with both male and female (if applicable) colleagues and bosses to understand any mentorship, camaraderie, discrimination, or harassment that occurred. Participants were also asked to track their tenure in their agency, including both lateral and promotional moves, length of employment in each unit or department, and how they came to occupy their current role. This enabled the identification of role assignments based on gender stereotypes and provided information on the rate of promotion. A full list of questions asked in the interviews is included in Appendix A.

At the end of each interview, I asked participants to refer potential interviewees based on the study's inclusion criteria. After the first four interviews in Louisiana, I began to specifically ask whether they knew any women of color who may be interested in participating, as the Louisiana sample was more racially homogenous than the California sample. To facilitate the transcription of interviews, I used a professional

transcription service for 12 of the interviews. After the interviews were transcribed and catalogued, any material that linked the participant's real name and/or contact information to their responses was destroyed to maintain confidentiality. All quotes were transcribed verbatim and reflect the language used by participants. I recognize that this leads to the inclusion of certain words (e.g., "bitch," "asshole," and "cunt') that do not commonly appear in academic writing, but it felt inappropriate to remove these words given their prevalence in policing culture. Including verbatim depictions of the harassment endured by many participants also ensures that the specifics of their experiences remain unaltered.

Sample

The sample featured in this study consists of 20 women who either currently work as police officers or have recently retired. I interviewed an equal number of participants in each state to evenly compare them. Ultimately, the sample was smaller than anticipated, and the Louisiana sample was more racially homogenous than expected. All participants are referred to using pseudonyms to maintain their confidentiality.

The California sample was diverse in terms of race and sexual identity. Five participants identified as white, two participants as African American/Black, one participant as Latina, one as Asian American, and one as bi-racial (African American and Latina). Among the 10 participants in California, there is an even division in sexual identity; half described themselves as straight or heterosexual and half as lesbian or gay. The California sample was highly educated; no participant had less than a bachelor's

degree, and two held master's degrees. The majority (*n* = 8) of the sample worked for municipal police departments, while two participants worked for sheriff's departments. The California sample also skewed older, with an age range of 48 to 61 years and an average age of 55.9 years. This was most likely due to the use of an older, retired gatekeeper in snowball sampling. In the California sample, three participants had children and one also had a grandchild.

The Louisiana sample was more homogenous with regard to race and sexual identity. Nine out of 10 participants identified as white, while one described herself as Hispanic. This homogeneity is likely due to both the smaller number of women officers of color compared to white women officers and the sampling method chosen, as white women were likely to refer other white women. Similarly, nine of the participants were straight or heterosexual and only one identified as gay. The highest level of education attained by the participants widely varied. Two participants held a high school diploma, two participants had associate degrees, one participant had a master's degree, and half (*n* = 5) had some college or university experience. Half of the participants worked for a police department, while four worked for a sheriff's department; the remaining participant had worked for both types of agency. In the Louisiana sample, the average age was 53 years and the age range was 41 to 64 years. Four participants had children, and two also had grandchildren.

Table 1: Participant Characteristics

Pseudonym	Age	Race*	Sexual Identity	Highest Level of Education	Police Department or Sheriff's Department	State
Gwen	61	African American	Straight	Bachelor's Degree	Sheriff's	California
Laura	56	White	Lesbian	Bachelor's Degree	Police	California
Kim	61	Asian American	Lesbian	Bachelor's Degree	Police	California
Julia	55	White	Lesbian	Master's Degree	Police	California
Amy	53	White	Straight	Bachelor's Degree	Police	California
Erin	58	White	Lesbian	Master's Degree	Police	California
Denise	50	African American and Latina	Straight	Bachelor's Degree	Police	California
Mary	48	Latina	Straight	Bachelor's Degree	Sheriff's	California
Gloria	57	Black	Straight	Bachelor's Degree	Police	California
Vicky	60	White	Lesbian	Bachelor's Degree	Police	California
Catherine	64	White	Straight	Some College	Police	Louisiana
Stephanie	41	Hispanic	Straight	High School Diploma	Sheriff's	Louisiana
Tammy	64	White	Straight	Some College	Police	Louisiana
Becky	48	White	Straight	Master's Degree	Police	Louisiana
Tina	59	White	Lesbian	Associate's Degree	Both	Louisiana
Heather	46	White	Straight	Some College	Sheriff's	Louisiana
Kelly	46	White	Straight	Some College	Police	Louisiana
Susan	52	White	Straight	Some College	Sheriff's	Louisiana
Helen	61	White	Straight	Associate's Degree	Sheriff's	Louisiana
Jessica	49	White	Straight	High School Diploma	Police	Louisiana

* In the ‘Race’ column I use the same terminology the participant did

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, I used a mix of emergent codes and codes derived from the extant literature on women police officers. For example, the code “women’s work” was identified in advance, while the code “effect of motherhood on police work” emerged

from the interview data. Consistent with the grounded theory approach to coding (Glaser and Strauss 1967), I first examined the data to create categories, then identified categories and related sub-categories. Finally, I compared the most salient and common codes. Based on these, themes and representative quotes were derived (Rabe-Hemp 2009).

This project involved the comparison of participant responses across two locations, which affected coding. In many cases, codes were consistent across samples, but their frequency or severity varied. In a few cases, some codes were unique to one setting. For example, the code "filing report or lawsuit" was unique to the California sample. I also used an intersectional approach to coding, which allowed me to identify trends in responses based on a participant's race, age, sexual identity, and motherhood status (if applicable). Existing literature on intersectional coding supports the use of multiple levels of coding to identify ways in which multiple identities overlap and create unique themes (Bowleg 2008). To facilitate this, I created a spreadsheet that included each participant's demographic details and pseudonym and added notes to highlighted passages when I observed patterns in shared identity groups. To code and catalogue the data, I used a cloud-based qualitative data software called Dedoose. It helped me to easily find and recall pertinent quotes based on codes and flag transcripts by location. Since I was the only researcher who coded the data, I engaged in a process of considering alternate explanations and negative cases before deriving findings from the data.

Reflexivity

While traditional research tends to hold objectivist views of social scientists, feminist scholars argue that the researcher's experience and identity shape the findings when the data is independent of the researcher (DeVault and Gross 2012). Therefore, it is imperative to acknowledge and analyze the ways in which my own biography shaped my approach to this research. I begin by outlining my personal relationship to police officers and police agencies, my theoretical and academic approach, and my status as a young white woman.

My experiences (or lack thereof) with police officers and the criminal justice system reflect the position of privilege from which I operate. I grew up in a middle- to upper-middle class household in neighborhoods with low crime rates; this created an environment in which police intervention was an unusual occurrence. My mother raised me to see police officers as agents of the government who primarily protect people. As a child, I was never afraid of the police, which was also shaped by my race. From the ages of 7–11, I lived across the street from a white heterosexual couple in which both people worked as police officers. These neighbors became family friends, furthering my childhood trust in the police.

I do not have immediate family ties to policing. The closest relative that I have is a paternal second cousin, whom I have only met on a handful of occasions. My understanding of the police was mostly shaped by my neighbors, television, and movies. As a child in the late 1990s and early 2000s, television was rife with true crime and fictional crime programs. The *Law & Order* spin-offs *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*

(SVU) and *Criminal Intent* debuted in 1999 and 2001, respectively, and were popular with viewers; SVU is still on the air and currently in its 23rd season (IMDB). While *Law & Order* is fictional, true crime programs such as *America's Most Wanted*, *Forensic Files*, and *Cops* also garnered high viewership (IMDB). Notably, in all of these programs, the story is told from the perspective of the police, and police officers are always the protagonists. As a viewer, this left me with a favorable bias toward the police.

This positive outlook changed while I pursued my undergraduate degree at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. In my criminology-focused courses, I was exposed to documentation of police bias, the structural racism of police institutions, and the selective enforcement of some crimes over others. The information presented in these courses rapidly changed my perspective to one of distrust of the police. These courses also led me to seek out media on the criminal justice system in my own time and ultimately shaped my decision to study gender and the criminal justice system in graduate education.

I drew on my relationship with my former neighbors to recruit participants for my master's degree project and make initial contact with the gatekeepers used in this study. By choosing to study women police officers, I hope to uncover the inequalities sustained in police agencies and the ensuing harm. This perspective informs my feminist approach to research. During the interviews, I often felt competing emotions of empathy for the maltreatment that participants endured and a wariness of pro-police bias. Although many of the participants positively viewed their careers in law enforcement overall, I brought a critical lens to even positive assertions. This sometimes created internal friction, and I

needed to hide my true feelings during interviews. For example, in one interview, the participant repeatedly blamed other women officers for their own harassment and disparaged other women to separate herself from them. This was the most challenging interview for me, as it required that I pretend to agree with her to maintain our rapport for the duration of the interview.

As a young white woman completing this research, I am also aware that the way in which I was perceived by participants likely impacted the responses that I received from them. The police are closed to outsiders, who can be seen as "spies" who attempt to gain secret information to use against officers (Horn 1997). I encountered some situations in which participants gave disclaimers or otherwise tempered their answers to not be seen as providing me with disparaging information, including phrases such as "it's not like this anymore" or "he was a bad apple, most guys are fine." However, in most cases, I suspect that my age, race, and gender made me seem non-threatening, a pattern described in past research (Horn 1997). I believe that my non-threatening image resulted in honesty from participants with regard to their experiences and opinions. However, it also resulted in several protective behaviors on their part. According to Horn (1997), women who research police work are perceived to be weaker and therefore in need of protection, in line with traditional gender roles. I suspect that this dynamic was exacerbated by my young age relative to the interviewees. Participants routinely offered me safety advice about neighborhoods that I should and should not visit and streets or routes to avoid after dark; in one case, a participant criticized the place where I was staying as not being safe enough for a lone woman.

Conclusion

In this study, I used semi-structured interviews to examine women police officers' experiences of workplace gender inequality. I followed practices outlined in existing qualitative research on women police officers to guide my approach, including snowball sampling and semi-structured interviews (Rabe-Hemp 2008, 2009, 2018). This dissertation extends this past research by considering inequality on three levels (i.e., structure, culture, and agency) and comparing women officers' responses across two contrasting locations, California and Louisiana. My own positionality shaped my methods and data analysis by allowing me to seem non-threatening to participants and shaped my critical approach to the data. The challenges I encountered in recruiting police officers to participate in my study suggests that they have become increasingly wary of researchers due to increased political polarization around policing.

CHAPTER 3: STRUCTURAL GENDER INEQUALITY IN POLICE AGENCIES

Introduction

Compared to police culture, the structure of police agencies is remarkably understudied. This may be because police institutions largely operate as black boxes, with little access granted to researchers regarding specific rules, regulations, and processes. However, when researchers have examined the structure of police agencies, they rarely considered gender inequality or the experiences of women officers. Police agencies have a unique structure, with rigid hierarchies that entail both written and unwritten rules (King 2003; Reiss 1992; Shelley, Morabito and Tobin-Gurley 2011). This structure was developed over decades to support those in power, beginning with "slave patrols" in the South and a desire to control poor people and immigrants in the North (Potter 2013; Uchida 1993). When women formally entered police work, they were given limited duties in line with stereotypical notions of femininity and separated from male officers until the 1970s (Appier 1998; Rabe-Hemp 2018). Today, the legacy of historical inequalities manifests as regulations and practices that structure the organization of contemporary police departments (Shelley et al 2011). Although this structure may appear to be gender-neutral, it in fact results in disparate outcomes according to gender and compounds gender inequality (Acker 1990; Britton 2011).

Due to this dearth of extant research, it is important to investigate how women police officers perceive and are affected by the structure of police agencies. To understand the latter, I first provide a brief history of policing in the United States, with particular attention to California and Louisiana, as it relates to women, people of color,

and lesbian, gay, and bisexual people. I selected these two states because they represent a progressive context and a more conservative context in which inequalities and how they manifest can be identified. I then used participant interview data to uncover women officer's experiences of several major elements of the structure of police agencies: the paramilitary structure, the recruitment and hiring process, the police academy and on-the-job training, the gender pay gap, and police uniforms.

Brief History of Police Agencies in the United States

Police agencies in the United States were born from two separate ideologies. The first, native to the Southern United States, was the formalization of police agencies following informal "slave patrols." The second, imported from the English system, was the predominant form of policing implemented in the Northern United States. In both cases, racism, classism, and anti-immigrant sentiment drove the proliferation of police agencies. In the South, outside of major metropolitan areas, the police developed from a different desire for social control, specifically the oppression of enslaved people. Slave patrols, which formally began in the early 1700s, were tasked with finding, capturing, and returning escaped enslaved people to their holders. They used violence and the threat of violence to deter uprisings or revolts and administered extra-legal punishments to enslaved people who violated plantation rules (Potter 2013). Although slavery was later outlawed, these patrols did not disband but instead morphed into official police departments that enforced Jim Crow era racial segregation laws into the mid-1900s (Potter 2013).

During the colonial era in the North, policing was modeled on existing systems in England, which relied on sheriffs, constables, and an informal night watch. Governor-appointed county sheriffs were most important while the colonies were small and rural (Uchida 1993). The sheriff's duties were determined by the governor and included collecting taxes, judicial tasks (e.g., serving subpoenas), and apprehending suspected criminals. The payment system for sheriffs entailed a fixed amount per task but could increase depending on the amount of taxes collected, which incentivized sheriffs to almost exclusively focus on collecting taxes and spend very little time on law enforcement as it is defined today (Uchida 1993). Once certain areas became more densely populated (i.e., Boston, New York, and Philadelphia), constables and volunteer night watches replaced sheriffs. Both were reactive in nature, responded to emergencies encountered while conducting street patrols on foot, and arrested those who were deemed suspicious (Lane 1992; Uchida 1993). This reactive rather than proactive approach was partly due to lack of administrative funds and the societal view of crime control as a private rather than a public problem (Lane 1992).

Political patronage and cronyism also plagued early police organizations, as officers enjoyed generous salaries but little job security. A change in local politics could lead to a complete turnover in police agency employees and the department's approach to crime and justice (Uchida 1993). Each newly elected official recruited and selected their own police force and determined which tasks would be highlighted and eliminated. Unlike today, the police represented "an extension of different political factions, rather than an extension of city government" (Uchida 1993: 12). This instability meant that

individual officers could not rely on institutional legitimacy to establish their authority and power; instead, each officer had to gain the respect of citizens on his own to gain legitimacy. This also meant that the level of service or punishment that a citizen could expect from the police varied from neighborhood to neighborhood and officer to officer (Uchida 1993). Police corruption was also common due to a lack of centralized oversight and broad individual officer discretion. To gain the respect of citizens, officers began to forge the masculine cultural images of police still relevant today: physical strength, street smarts, and independence (Rabe-Hemp 2018).

The professionalization of the police is widely attributed to the reforms established by Sir Robert Peel, who served as the British home secretary from 1828 to 1830. His efforts to professionalize the police force included the introduction of uniforms based on those used in the military and the classification of police officer as a paid occupation instead of a volunteer rotation. Peel was also instrumental in the creation of the London Metropolitan Police, the United Kingdom's first full-time uniformed police agency, through legislative changes and his experience serving as chief secretary for Ireland (Monkkonen 1992). By professionalizing the police, Peel shifted police power from individuals to institutions, providing police officers with legitimacy and authority under the constitution. Although the same problems that led to Peel's reforms (i.e., overcrowding, poverty, and general disorder) were also present in the United States, efforts to professionalize the police force were unpopular with American politicians at the time (Uchida 1993). The piecemeal implementation of police professionalization ultimately occurred due to citizens' desire for greater police control following waves of

new immigration and perceptions of immigrants as a threat to the social status quo and class system (Uchida 1993). In some cases, members of the public who opposed immigration and other social changes engaged in vigilantism by destroying brothels or bars and requiring the intervention of local militias, which accelerated the push to centralize police forces.

The history of policing in the United States informs the current exclusionary structure of police agencies. Police organizations in both the North and South were often established in response to racism, classism, and anti-immigrant sentiment (Potter 2013; Uchida 1993) and were staffed by supporters of local politicians. Issues that plagued early policing and persist today include corruption, cronyism, lack of accountability, and the unequal application of justice. Finally, the current structure of police agencies and the stated role of the police are built on masculine cultural images of the police that were established in an era when officers had no institutional legitimacy and instead acted as individual strong men, although professionalization was intended to eliminate this (Monkkonen 1992).

Women's Entry into Police Agencies

Women's formal entry into policing accompanied a rise in efforts to enact widespread social reform in the late 1800s and first decades of the 20th century. Women activists attempted to participate in politics by reforming several public institutions, including police agencies. Vocal proponents of the creation of "policewoman" and "police matron" positions were overwhelmingly white, middle-class, and Christian

women affiliated with maternalist activism (Appier 1998). Their desire for social reform was tied to traditional ideas of femininity and motherhood and led to the creation of juvenile courts and separate detention centers for minors and women, which were often supervised by police matrons (Appier 1998). Although the efforts of these female activists resulted in some positive outcomes for children and women, their reform attempts were tied to racism and classism.

The role of early policewomen was narrower than that of their male counterparts and primarily focused on crime prevention, which conveniently circumvented women's lack of authority to make arrests. These policewomen and matrons were not issued service weapons and tasked with staffing women's prisons and jails, interacting with female victims of crime, and attending to most duties involving minors. Early policewomen and their supporters were frustrated by male police officers' lack of interest in enforcing "vice" laws related to drinking, gambling, and sex work, which led women officers to focus on changing or controlling moral transgressions rather than violent crime. In this way, they were part of the moral entrepreneurs against vice during this time. As Appier found, "The movement for women police was decentralized, localistic, and highly politicized. Police departments usually hired women officers reluctantly and in most instances only because of political pressure from women's groups and organizations" (1998:40). This political pressure often followed a highly publicized tragedy involving a local young white woman or girl; calls for policewomen to work with women and girls increased based on the assumption that women were uniquely suited to this type of work.

Male police officers and police leaders saw women's attempts to enact moral reform as a threat to the autonomy of police agencies, which fostered hostility between male officers (and superiors) and policewomen. This hostility was partly responsible for the initial pay disparity between policewomen and male officers. In some cases, policewomen's salaries were partly or fully funded through another organization (both governmental and non-governmental). During the Progressive Era, several service-oriented women's clubs—most notably, the Chicago Women's Club—assembled private protective associations staffed by women club members, which focused on the safety of women and children (Appier 1998). These private protective organizations engaged in crime prevention by improving the social and physical environment, such as building more playgrounds and arguing for the increased supervision of teenage girls by parents. These organizations were funded through the club's financial resources and other donations. Gender inequities were baked into policing from women's first entry into the field. Across the nation, policewomen were paid far less than male officers. For example, in San Francisco in 1910, women earned $1,200 per year while men earned $1,464. In Chicago, the highest recorded salary for a woman in policing in 1915 was $900, while male officers earned between $900 and $1,320 per year on average (Schultz 1996). These examples confirm the long history of pay disparity based on gender.

While there was variation across states regarding policewomen, the federal government hired its first women in policing roles during World War I to prevent soldiers from engaging in morally deviant activities such as promiscuity, drinking, and the contraction of sexually transmitted infections. This group was termed the Committee on

Protective Work for Girls (CPWG); rather than interacting with the soldiers themselves, members worked with young women to provide sex education and counseling and lectures on good behavior (Appier 1998). This focus on altering the behavior of young women instead of young men reflects the sexist beliefs of the time. The federal government's acceptance of policewomen was a consequence of societal panics over the rise in sexual activity between unmarried young women and soldiers (Schultz 1996). These fears fueled a rise in the number of cities that employed policewomen: from 125 in 1916 to 220 in 1918 (Schultz 1996).

The number of women in policing stagnated and declined from the 1930s to the 1970s largely as a result of the Depression and World War II, which shifted policy focus away from these types of social reforms and led to less public and political pressure on police agencies (Martin & Jurik 2009). It was only after the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 that women officers (as well as officers of color) were able to serve as full-time sworn police officers. This was not an easy process, as many agencies resisted this change both officially and informally. Early policewomen gained entry into police agencies by highlighting the ways in which traditionally feminine behaviors and roles could complement police work and crime prevention. However, by relying on these tropes, they created a legacy of women's work in policing that continues to haunt female officers today.

In particular, California is a trailblazer for women in policing, as it was the first state to hire women in policing roles. In 1909, Alice Stebbins Wells successfully petitioned the Los Angeles mayor and city council to create the position of

“policewoman” to enable women to work in police agencies with arrest power (Los Angeles Police Department 2019). The following year, she was appointed as the city and the country’s first policewoman. While she had her own badge (emblazoned with “Policewoman’s Badge Number One”), she did not carry a firearm or participate in the regular police duties of male officers, such as patrol and investigations (Appier 1998). Instead, she was charged with questioning young women or girls and enforcing moral laws in public recreation areas. Stebbins Wells’ appointment generated discriminatory backlash, which ranged from merchants and streetcar drivers not extending customary police discounts to her to more severe cases of peers and the public undermining her work (Appier 1998; Los Angeles Police Department 2019). A few years later, in 1913, Oakland hired its first two female officers, Beatrice A. McCall and Alice Richardson (Appier 1998).

Compared to California, Louisiana was slower to allow women’s integration into police organizations. In 1915, Alice Monahan was appointed as the first policewoman in New Orleans and Louisiana (Asher 2018). She acted as a chaperone and enforcer of morals at Milneburg, a resort area known for alcohol consumption, dancing, and sex work. She was constantly harassed at work, subjected to citizen complaints due to her “unfitness,” and received threatening phone calls at home (Asher 2018). The rest of Louisiana did not catch up to New Orleans until the 1960s, when Baton Rouge hired its first three female police officers in 1969 (Toohey 2018). It is possible that this reluctance to hire women for officer roles was due to a lack of pressure from local activists, the

conservative political environment in most of Louisiana, or a lack of consequences for discrimination against women in employment (which was not protected until 1972).

The History of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Officers

Until the late 1970s and early 1980s, it was common practice in police agencies to forbid the hiring of gay candidates and to fire officers who were found to be or suspected of being gay. In 1978, San Francisco became the first city in the United States to not only accept gay officers but also actively recruit them (Cohen 1979). In the same year, Mayor Ed Koch issued an executive order that banned discrimination based on sexual orientation in all New York City agencies. The president of the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association, the city's largest police union, issued a public statement condemning Koch's order and argued that gay men (lesbian women were not mentioned at all) were too effeminate to be accepted by fellow officers and would never be respected by members of the public (Weber 2015). During the Clinton administration, employment discrimination toward gay and lesbian officers in federal law enforcement was banned; this ban extended to the two largest employers of federal workers, the Justice Department and the Treasury Department (Noga-Styron, Reasons, and Peacock 2012). However, these protections did not affect municipal, county, and state police agencies. Although some police agencies have begun to actively recruit gay and lesbian officers, "only 14% of police departments reported having an affirmative action hiring practice toward LGBT individuals" as of 2005 (p.383). Even after hiring, police agencies are unwelcoming places for lesbian, gay,

and bisexual officers, who face higher workplace stress and have lower retention rates than their heterosexual counterparts (Bartollas and Hahn 1999).

Today, protections against workplace discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation vary state by state. In 18 states, including Louisiana, there are no laws or statutes that protect LGBTQIA workers from employment discrimination (Movement Advancement Project N.d.). However, based on a 2020 Supreme Court ruling, people in all states can seek recourse for employment discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity through the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). In a 2009 study of gay and lesbian police officers, Colvin found that the most commonly reported barriers to workplace equality were promotions (22%), job assignments (17%), and performance evaluations (16%). This aligns with the finding that discrimination is most likely to occur when decisions are left to supervisors rather than standardized and implemented without discretion (Walker 1985).

The History of Women Officers of Color

The first African American police officers were appointed in the 1860s and 1870s in Charleston, Jackson, Chicago, and Washington, DC. However, as Reconstruction failed, these gains were reversed and justified through segregation laws. In 1890, Black officers comprised 2.7% of all police officers; by 1910, this figure had declined below 2%. It only increased above 2% in 1950, and the percentage of Black officers only reached 5% in 1970 (Kuykendall and Burns 1980). There is scarce large-scale data on the race of women sworn police officers, but scholars have suggested that, as in other fields,

Black women face a “double jeopardy” in employment because they are exposed to both gender and racial discrimination (Martin 1994).

In 1916, Georgia Ann Robinson became the nation’s first African American female police officer (then called “policewoman”) as part of the LAPD (Los Angeles Police Department 2019). In Northern California, Saundra Brown was hired as the first African American woman police officer in 1970; she left the Oakland Police Department in 1977 and later became a judge in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California (Coleman Morris 2016). While little is known about the prevalence of Black women officers, even less is known about non-white women of other races. In 1917, Mary del Valle became the first Latina appointed to the LAPD (as a non-officer) and Josephine Serrano became the nation’s first Latina policewoman after being hired by the LAPD in 1946 at age 24 (Los Angeles Police Department 2019). Joyce Kano was hired in 1967 by the LAPD and was their first Asian American female police officer; she eventually became a detective. In 2004, the San Francisco Police Department appointed Heather Fong, the first female Asian American police chief in a major city (Van Derbeken 2004).

In the South, only 10 cities employed Black (male) police officers between 1900 and 1920 (Kuykendall and Burns 1980). In 1870, New Orleans employed 177 Black officers and Black people represented a majority of police commission members (Rousey 1987). However, this was short-lived, as the commission-based police department was abolished by 1877 in favor of a police department controlled by local politicians, which led to the removal of Black personnel (Rousey 1987). This did not substantially change

until after 1924, when more cities began to hire Black officers to decrease distrust and hostility toward the police among Black residents (Kuykendall and Burns 1980). It is important to note that, during this post-1920 push, Black officers were still segregated from white officers and only allowed to police Black neighborhoods and arrest Black residents (Kuykendall and Burns 1980). In 1963, the BRPD hired its first Black officers: Steve Millican, Joe Stevens, and Alfred Cummings. An African American officer hired in the 1960s recalled his first experience of giving a citation to a white man: "That evening, the sergeant said, 'You were outside your zone,' and he told me the next time there would be disciplinary action […] They assigned us to areas that were mostly black" (Toohey 2018:1). Although this practice became illegal following the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, Black officers reported that this type of discrimination was still informally perpetrated (Martin 1994). The BRPD only hired its first Latinx officer in 1976 and Asian American officer in 2007 (Toohey 2018). No data is available on women officers of color in the Baton Rouge area.

Women's Experiences of Structural Gender Inequality in Police Organizations' Paramilitary Structure

Although police culture sometimes overlaps with or informs structure, examining women officers' experiences of the unique structure of police agencies can shed light on how it produces inequalities. One such indicator of structure is the paramilitary structure of policing, but very few studies have investigated it through a gendered lens. While cultural explanations of gender inequality consider the ways in which informal processes

operate within an organization, structural approaches are concerned with the rules as they are written and how formal mechanisms produce unequal outcomes according to gender. In Acker's (1990) theory of gendered institutions, she outlined four processes through which gender is created and maintained within organizations. The first process is the use of gender as a dividing line that impacts the division of labor and the allocation of space, power, and legitimacy along gender lines, which effectively controls and segregates women; it is the process that is most directly related to structural inequality.

Another process identified by Acker (1990) is the image of organizational structure and rules as gender-neutral, when they in fact perpetuate gender inequality (Acker 1990). Similarly, Martin (2000) argued that gender-neutral attempts at police reform are doomed to fail: "It is not enough to give women equal opportunity to be hired, evaluated fairly, and promoted – this is the 'add women and stir approach.' […] Without major society-wide changes in the gendered ways work is structured on the job and at home, women will continue to hit glass walls and glass ceilings" (208). Yet, much of the literature on the structure of police agencies either ignores gender or fails to meaningfully engage with systemic gender inequality. Police agencies and their inherent paramilitary structure exert social controls to keep white male police leaders in power (Shelley et al 2011). Shelley et al. argued that "women face difficulties that their male peers do not – namely – they must navigate the overt and increasing covert forms of control and segregation that are legitimized through the military-based management style of many police agencies while also traversing the socially constructed gender hierarchy typified by White male dominance" (2011:354).

The paramilitary structure of police agencies emphasizes hierarchy and a rigid command structure in which the higher an individual reaches on the hierarchy, the more formal authority and power they have over those in lower ranks (King 2003; Shelley et al 2011). Paramilitary organizations also assert more control and expect more subordination from workers than non-paramilitary workplaces. Reiss (1992) contended that one effect of early efforts at police reform was the transformation of police organizations into bureaucracies with strong norms of compliance and service among officers that widely differed from other governmental institutions. Crank and Langworthy (1992) argued that "institutional myths" shape the structure and activities of police agencies and play a key role in developing and maintaining legitimacy, a process in which police culture becomes fixed into the agency structure. In this context, "myths" refers to social creations that are reified and become so integral to the organization that they are taken for granted as true and correct (Crank and Langworthy 1992). For example, the police's crime-fighting image was a product of deliberate actions taken by police leaders in the 1930s that led to institutional change toward police as law enforcement, although a relatively small proportion of police activities directly involve crime fighting (Crank and Langworthy 1992).

It has been argued that police agencies operate as bureaucracies (Reiss 1992). Bureaucracies are organizations with several features (e.g., task specialization and explicit rules and regulations) that are oriented toward the most efficient way to fulfill a given task (Weber 1920). The paramilitary structure of policing relies on other bureaucratic characteristics: a clear division of labor, hierarchical supervisory layers, and

strict rules for each role and employee (Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce 2010; Weber 1920). Ferguson (1984) argued that bureaucracy itself is an instrument of male domination. Bonnes (2017) found that the bureaucratic system that organizes the military (on which the structure of police agencies is modeled) is rife with harassment and discrimination due to its structure. Specifically, perpetrators use the bureaucratic system against women service members. Military and paramilitary organizations afford higher-ranking members greater power, while little recourse is provided to lower-ranking members who experience mistreatment; this situation enables the rampant discrimination and harassment of women in lower ranks (Bonnes 2017). If a woman does have the courage to report a senior officer instead of having her complaint investigated, she may be punished for breaching the chain of command with her complaint (Sass and Troyer 1999). Although this power imbalance may seem gender-neutral on the surface, it is unequal in its effect, as women continue to be underrepresented in leadership positions and face greater barriers to promotion than men (Martin and Jurik 2007).

The use of a paramilitary structure in police agencies is not ideal, but it continues to be the default in the United States. Similarly, Mastrofski's (1999) institutional model of structural change in police organizations asserts that, rather than being rationally structured toward the completion of organizational mandates, police agencies are structured according to institutional myths with little rational foundation. To apply a gendered lens to this approach, institutional myths are gendered and assume that workers are male; therefore, when these myths form the basis of police agency structure, gender inequality is innate. Cordner (1978) argued that the tall hierarchical structure of police

organizations is not conducive to the varying and unpredictable demands of policing. However, police agencies have become "institutionalized," thereby reaching a position in which the organization's culture and image are considered more important than the rational fulfillment of stated goals (Crank and Langworthy 1992; Maguire 2003). For example, one study in California found that only one third of all on-shift activity involved crime fighting; instead, most officers' work consisted of responding to service calls (Brown 1981). Despite the small amount of time spent engaging in violent altercations with suspects, police agencies continue to emphasize physical strength and assertiveness in hiring and promotion (Sass and Troyer 1999).

Past research has highlighted that a paramilitary structure is not ideal for contemporary police agencies. This is because agencies are no longer organized most efficiently and rationally based on their missions (Crank and Langworthy 1992; Cordner 1978; Maguire 2003) and because this structure creates and perpetuates gender inequality (Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce 2010; Sass and Troyer 1999). However, few studies have examined the paramilitary structure's effect on gender inequality, and even fewer have examined the ways in which women officers experience this structure. In this study, participants described the paramilitary structure of police agencies as functional but not ideal. Women officers in California were more willing than women officers in Louisiana to be critical of the paramilitary structure and implement a different management style. Finally, in line with past research, a higher rank and therefore greater power in a paramilitary structure does not protect women—specifically women of color—from harassment and discrimination.

Participants who viewed the existing structure of policing as functional but not ideal included individuals with military experience. Kelly, 46, worked as an officer in Louisiana; she argued that the paramilitary structure was functional and necessary: "The way public views us is a hindrance, but the way we view it is not." Kelly admitted that her previous experience in the military acclimatized her to the structure of police agencies:

> It's easier for someone that's been in the military. Now some people with the paramilitary organization, they take it and they are gung-ho, and they do everything great. But I find that people that have been in the military before have a whole different [perspective], they're gonna take an order from me, especially a female, and say, "How high do you need me to jump?" Other people would be like, "Who does she think she is?" They respect the rank.

Interestingly, studies have found that women in the military experience sexual harassment at higher rates than civilian federal government employees. Studies have found that up to 31% of women service members have experienced harassment within the past year (Bonnes 2017; Stander and Thomsen 2016). These findings seem to contradict Kelly's assertion that military experience leads to more compliant behavior toward women supervisors.

Participants in California were more likely to both criticize the existing paramilitary structure and to implement alternative approaches as leaders. Amy, 53, an officer in California, believed that the paramilitary structure of policing was only important in certain situations:

> I think you have to have some paramilitary structure for what you do out in the field because you can't have people question you. So if you're the sergeant in charge of a situation, you can't have people question you. And so, when people know that I'm a Sergeant and I'm going to say, "this is what you're going to do."

> They know they need to do it. They know they can't just push back, ask questions, whatever, because the timing does not allow for that.

Denise, 50, who also works as an officer in California, argued that police officers encounter life circumstances that members of the military do not, which makes the paramilitary structure troublesome:

> Obviously there's a downside because you're not in the military and it's hard to balance, especially when you're talking about work, life balance. As a sergeant, if somebody has to go home because there's an issue at home, there are guys now, it's becoming more accepted to be more human. You hear more people say, "Your family first. You got to deal with family stuff." But, there's still a contingent of the old school guys who are like, "You always come to work no matter what." You got your arms cut off and you're sick and your wife's sick and whatever, you just still come to work. There's still some of those guys.

Similarly, Kim, 61, who was also from California, found the paramilitary structure constraining: "There's no room to hear other perspectives or even questions—that was frustrating. Then when I made rank, I let my people make their own decisions, my little protest. Also, you've gotta take care of your people, I worked hard to recognize their stuff [efforts and accomplishments]." Thus, when Kim was in a position to be in charge of others, she purposely chose a different approach. Silvestri (2007) studied female police leaders and found that they are much more likely to use a participatory leadership style and consensus building than their male counterparts. Julia, 55, an officer in California, chose to use consensus-building approaches rather than relying on the command structure:

> I didn't have to order people to do stuff too much, because I always seemed to gain the cooperation. I mean if they respect you as a leader, as a manager, then they're gonna do what they're supposed to do. I only remember a couple times in my career actually ordering somebody to do something and like, "If you don't do this, I will make sure that you get in trouble. You will do this and you will do it

> now." And usually it was in, in reference to an incident that was happening in the field.

Participants' willingness to engage in more relaxed management styles is consistent with existing research.

Even at a higher rank, female officers still face significant harassment and discrimination (Silvestri 2007). Gwen, 61, an officer from California, experienced insubordination:

> When you're the boss it falls on you. Now I was set up to fail by [my subordinates], they didn't follow my directions and then when someone found out, they told them that's what I had told them to do in the first place. That's a lie! I was only cleared because the other sergeants had my back.

When asked if she believed her gender or race had an impact on this behavior, she replied, "well, they never did it to the guy before me." This dynamic, which has been termed "contrapower harassment" (Rospenda, Richman and Nawynis 1998), has been well-documented in the fields of higher education (Grauerholz 1989; Matchen and DeSouza 2000; McKinney 1990; Lampman et al 2009) and health care (Christensen, Craft and White 2020; Schneider and Phillips 1997). However, it is rarely applied to the experiences of women who work in military and paramilitary settings (Bonnes 2017). In this sample, more women of color reported experiencing contrapower harassment than white women (3:1), which is in line with past studies on women of color in the military (Bonnes 2017; Burk and Espinoza 2012). This finding underscores the necessity of using an intersectional approach to understanding structural inequality.

Pathways and Obstacles to Getting Hired

In recent years, many police agency leaders have lamented drastic reductions in applicants, which has led to widespread staffing shortages (BJS 2018; Jordan et al 2009). The movement for racial justice following several high-profile killings of unarmed Black civilians by current and former members of law enforcement in the spring of 2020 further exacerbated this decline in employment applications and a 45% increase in retirements (PERF 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic also affected the staffing of police agencies. In 2020 and 2021, the coronavirus was the foremost killer of police officers, leading to the highest annual rate of officer deaths since 1930 (NLEOMF 2020; NLEOMF 2021). It is important to note that police work is not among the deadliest occupations in the United States; employees in transportation occupations are 11 times more likely to be killed at work than police officers, and construction workers are 8.5 times more likely to experience a workplace fatality than police officers (BLS 2021).

In a nationwide survey of 194 police agencies, the Police Executive Research Forum (2021) found only a 5% reduction in hiring among respondents. Instead, the major contributing factors in the reduction in staffing among officers were a 45% overall increase in retirements and a 59% increase among departments employing between 50 and 249 officers (PERF 2021). Notably, calls for more applicants lacked targeted action on the part of agencies to hire applicants who do not resemble the majority of current police officers Jordan et al. (2009) found that a focus on the recruitment of people of color and women was positively correlated with increased hiring overall. Conversely, studies have indicated that women may self-select out of careers in policing. For

example, Rossler et al. (2020) surveyed 640 undergraduate students enrolled in criminal justice courses about perceived barriers to careers in policing. These varied by gender, with women listing concerns about possible physical abilities, the police academy, their possible career mobility, and competing for patrol positions (Rossler et al 2020:384).

Several aspects of the recruitment and hiring process have disparate impacts according to gender, which leads to fewer female recruits and hires compared to their male counterparts. First, not many police agencies specifically target women in their recruitment techniques (Jordan et al 2009). One major avenue through which most job seekers learn about open jobs and are ultimately hired is networking and other connections. This disadvantages women candidates because of the "old boys' club" inherent to policing (Rabe-Hemp 2018). Kanter's (1977) theory of homosocial reproduction, in which hiring managers are conditioned to choose candidates who are similar to them, also disadvantages women and non-white candidates due to their minority status in most agencies. In this way, hiring privileges those with existing connections to police officers.

Similarly, several factors determine which applicants are prioritized, which leads to fewer female applicants progressing to later stages of hiring. First, most agencies implement a preference for veterans in hiring, which means that applicants with military experience are treated more favorably in candidate ranking; men form the overwhelming majority of service members (Britton 2011). In the past, physical fitness tests have also been used to exclude female candidates by requiring feats of strength that are inconsistent with the daily work of most officers (Britton 2011; Rabe-Hemp 2018). Although such

practices have been successfully challenged in court, other mechanisms used by the government to ensure the recruitment of a more diverse group of candidates have been less successful. Consent decrees are one form of affirmative action used in the legal system to rectify gender and racial imbalance in police agencies (Sass and Troyer 1999). However, consent decrees have either expired or been rescinded in recent years, which has led to a plateau in the number of women officers (Rossler et al 2020).

The women officers interviewed in this study have had varying experiences with these barriers to entry. Some participants entered policing due to previous military experience, which was more common in the Louisiana sample. Other participants had a family connection to policing, such as a male relative or romantic partner who helped them through the hiring process. This connection was mostly observed among white women, which reflects the reproduction of inequality in hiring. None of the participants described the physical test as a barrier to entry, although some cited other hiring components (e.g., psychological evaluation, background check, and interviews) as obstacles to employment. Finally, among participants who identified as women of color and those over 50 years of age, consent decrees had a positive effect on their career in policing.

Pathways to Police Work

Many police officers are recruited and hired through specific pathways, such as family members who work in law enforcement, the preference for veterans in hiring, and departmental consent decrees among women and people of color (Britton 2010; Morabito

and Shelley 2018; Sass and Troyer 1999). Family connections to policing are further discussed in relation to interviewing and other obstacles in the hiring process. There has been a long-standing preference for veterans in law enforcement hiring, which has been criticized for contributing to the militarization of the police. A preference for veterans in hiring is also an example of organizational logic that appears to be gender-neutral, but "in fact it advantages men, who are about 86% of active duty military personnel" (Britton 2010:131). As early as the 1980s, Martin (1989) documented the use of bonus points toward promotion scores for military veterans as a barrier to promotion for women. Despite the unequal effects of this practice, veteran preference in hiring has persisted to the present day. Among women that were hired as veterans, Morabito and Shelley (2018) found that military experience was a significant factor that led women to pursue careers in policing and that respondents believed that military experience gave them an advantage in the police academy and on-the-job training.

In the sample, four participants were veterans from various branches of the military (three in Louisiana and one in California). Participants in this study echoed past findings, arguing that military experience "helped a lot" and "really prepared" them for working at a police agency. It is also important to note that more women in the Louisiana sample were veterans, which may reflect the fact that nine out of 10 participants from Louisiana were white and whites are the majority racial group in every branch of the military (CFR 2020). If race is the major contributing factor in this pattern, then the veteran preference in hiring discriminates against both women and people of color.

Consent decrees have been used by the federal government to encourage police agencies to diversify their ranks in terms of gender and race (Sass and Troyer 1999). Consent decrees are a form of court-ordered affirmative action applied to police agencies in response to litigation for racial or sexual discrimination. These orders often include timetables for increasing the number of women and people of color employed by the agency (Sass and Troyer 1999). The effectiveness of consent decrees in increasing diversity in police agencies has been mixed. Sass and Troyer (1999) found that "external legal constraints [i.e., consent decrees] did significantly affect hiring decisions in the 1980s. For both 1981 and 1987, a prior anti-discrimination decision is associated with a 7 to 10 percentage point increase in the proportion of new female police hires" (p.579). Part of the reason that consent decrees have failed is their structure, which prioritizes hiring as the solution to a lack of diversity.

Consent decrees incentivize hiring but not the retention of women and people of color. This leads to a pattern in which candidates are hired and trained but ultimately denied a role at the end of the process. This allows police agencies to maintain the image of complying with the consent decree while ultimately maintaining their hiring practices. Like other forms of affirmative action, consent decrees have been used to diminish the ability and achievements of affected women and people of color. Haarr (1997:78) found that 70% of white male officers believed that their Black male colleagues had an unfair advantage in hiring and promotion. This false belief leads to resentment and claims of "reverse racism" among some officers, which affects the workplace dynamics experienced by women and people of color (Haarr 1997).

In this study, participants who were over age 50 or women of color were more likely to cite consent decrees as influential to their entry into policing. Laura, 56, an officer from California, was hired under a consent decree:

> I knew this gal, who, she was an officer with ATF, we played softball together. [...] Now at the time ATF had a consent decree so they were hiring [women]. But they were only making their numbers look good, they dumped me after a year. […] Then [a local department] hired me. And it's funny because they were under a consent decree too, but I stayed.

In Laura's case, consent decrees were both beneficial and harmful; in her first experience, she was only hired to increase the number of women, but the police department that she moved to next was the one that she would remain at until retirement. The prevalence of consent decrees in the hiring of participants over age 50 is likely due to the reduction in their use since their peak in the 1970s to the 1990s, which means that younger officers are less likely to be hired by an agency under an active consent decree (Rossler et al 2020). Participants of color were also more likely to cite a consent decree as part of their employment history; this may be attributable to the fact that, in many cases, affirmative action efforts targeted both racial and gender equality, which may have led to these participants' recruitment under either or both initiatives.

Table 2: Participants' Status as Veterans and Presence of Family Connection to Law Enforcement

Pseudonym	State	Military Veteran	Family Ties to Policing
Amy	CA	Y	Ex-Husband
Becky	LA	N	Husband
Catherine	LA	N	-
Denise	CA	N	-
Erin	CA	N	Cousin
Gloria	CA	N	-
Gwen	CA	N	-
Heather	LA	N	-
Helen	LA	N	-
Jessica	LA	Y	Father
Julia	CA	N	-
Kelly	LA	Y	Ex-Husband
Kim	CA	N	-
Laura	CA	N	-
Mary	CA	N	Father
Stephanie	LA	Y	-
Susan	LA	N	Ex-Boyfriend
Tammy	LA	N	-
Tina	LA	N	Uncle
Vicky	CA	N	-

Pre-Employment Fitness Tests

Physical fitness tests have been used as a seemingly neutral tool to exclude women by requiring feats of upper body strength that are unnecessary to an officer's role and purposely omitting elements in which women may excel, such as long-distance running (Britton 2011:131). Height and weight requirements were some of the first tools used to systematically exclude women applicants. Rabe-Hemp (2018) cited a rule in Ohio prior to 1973, which required all applicants to weigh at least 150 pounds; this disqualified 80% of female applicants and 20% of male applicants. The Supreme Court ruled in *Smith*

vs. the City of East Cleveland (1973) and *Dothard v. Rawlinson* (1977) that height and weight requirements unfairly discriminated against women (Rabe-Hemp 2018).

Many departments now implement two standards: one for male applicants and one for female applicants. Erin, 58, an officer in California, outlined her experience with fitness tests: "Yeah there were two [standards]: male and female. But I made it my mission to pass the male requirement. I didn't want to give 'em any ammunition." Erin believed that only passing the required test for female applicants would lead her to not being taken as seriously by male coworkers and provide colleagues with "ammunition" to disparage her. Sass and Troyer (1999) proposed a key argument related to physical fitness tests: "if physical fitness is an important determinant of officer productivity, police departments should administer fitness exams to both new recruits and to experienced officers" (582). If physical fitness tests are instead used to exclude women candidates, an agency would only need to implement a one-time test requirement during hiring. The data supports the latter; in 1990, approximately 83% of police agencies mandated a fitness test for new recruits, while only 22% had regular fitness tests for all officers (Sass and Troyer 1999). Similarly, requiring fitness tests for candidates is positively correlated with the proportion of male officers in a police agency, while periodic fitness tests were negatively correlated with this proportion (Sass and Troyer 1999). Union status complicates this pattern: among unionized departments, one-time fitness tests were far more common than periodic tests. This supports the assertion that police unions represent the white male majority at the expense of women officers (Sass and Troyer 1999).

Other Obstacles To Employment

While physical fitness tests are one of the most visible mechanisms of gender exclusion in hiring, participants said that other elements of the hiring process were equally exclusionary. In addition, these other components were more serious threats to women's employment because they were more subjective and made claims of discrimination more difficult to substantiate. Discrimination in these steps of the hiring process has also been understudied, likely due to the difficulty of proving deliberate disparate treatment by gender. In this study, women officers described experiencing rejection during job interviews, psychological evaluations, and background checks. These experiences were common across both locations. They also described the benefits of having an existing connection to a police officer in terms of networking and coaching for interviews. Of the eight respondents with family connections in law enforcement, all contacts were male; moreover, seven out of eight participants were white. This suggests that the lack of a close contact in policing was more common among candidates of color, which constitutes another obstacle to overcome.

The first issue that participants described was differential treatment according to gender in job interviews. As Tammy, 64, an officer from Louisiana, summarized, "there is a definite bias and double standard of what they want from male and female applicants." Similarly, Denise, 50, an officer from California, recounted a negative experience interviewing for a position:

> The interview panel were, they were all men, and they were just, they were rude and mean and not that I couldn't hold my own, but I just walked out of the interview thinking, "Why would I want to work here if that's the way they're going to treat a potential police officer for their agency? Why would you do that?"

> I came to realize as time went on [that] the law enforcement field in this county was not super excited about women applying. Then it all made sense.

While Denise encountered hostility during her interview, other participants described more ephemeral reasons for their rejection.

Although it is now illegal to make hiring decisions based on sexual identity in California, an officer named Julia, 55, was asked about this aspect during her psychological evaluation:

> I remember being asked in the psychological if I was, you know, they asked back then if you were gay or not. And I said I was. And then I thought, "Oh man, what if that causes problems?" And obviously it didn't, but I, I was nervous initially. And then somehow that information—which is confidential—made it back to the police department. And so by the time I came to the department everybody kind of knew that I was gay.

Julia's experience not only reflects a potentially illegal practice on the part of the evaluator but also a violation of her right to privacy since her confidential information was shared with colleagues.

Erin, 58, an officer in California, was rejected after her background check:

> I tested for a couple of agencies. I got all the way to the end hiring with one. And then they did my background, and for some reason they didn't hire me. I don't know why. They can make those decisions very subjectively. They can talk to one person who says, "Well, I don't think she'd be a good cop," and they can base it on that.

Moreover, many departments look for "command presence," a coded term for the stereotypically aggressive and decisive style of communication predominantly used by male officers. Conversely, very few departments look for a candidate's ability to diffuse and deescalate conflict (Britton 2010). Such preferences reflect and uphold the

paramilitary structure of policing. Amy, 53, an officer in California, described command presence that as one of the specific traits that agencies sought in candidates:

> And I had tested for [an agency]. I didn't pass. It's pretty common when you're a young officer, or you want to be an officer, that the first couple of times you test for police, unless you have a lot of coaching from somebody who's in the field, you'll bomb the interviews. Because you don't know what they're looking for.

As Amy suggested, having an existing connection in the police agency is beneficial for identifying what employers desire in a candidate. This is one of the reasons why one of the pathways to police work is having a family connection to law enforcement. Among the participants, eight had family ties to policing and seven out of eight identified as white, which reflects an exclusionary pattern of advantage. In some cases, having an existing contact was vital to being hired. Becky, 48, who was from Louisiana, was surprised to be hired despite a lack of connection:

> Normally, to get those [state police agency] jobs, you needed to contact your representative to kind of get you help to get your foot in the door, and it just so happened that the [town] area, which is two hours west of here, no one was interested I guess in that area. So when I started with them, that's the area that I got. So I moved down to [town], and I was just fortunate that no one with any political stroke was interested in that area.

These more subjective forms of exclusion in the hiring process are especially troublesome due to the difficulty of proving that discrimination or bias has occurred.

The Police Academy and On-the-Job Training

The Police Academy Experience

The police academy and subsequent on-the-job training are important avenues for teaching new recruits about the unequal culture of policing. While Prokos and Padavic

(2002:446) described the official training texts and curriculum as "scrupulously gender-neutral," women were treated as social outsiders in reality; they were not included in social events or used in examples, and trainers used only male pronouns in reference to trainees and officers. This cemented the image of men as the default in policing and, once women trainees were labeled as outsiders, "boundary heightening" occurred (Kanter 1977). Perceived gender differences were noted and exaggerated by academy staff; to be feminine was to be weak or incompetent (Prokos and Padavic 2002). Male students openly engaged in detailed sexually explicit discussions, used "pussies" as an insult, and made objectifying comments about women shown in training videos and other materials. Instructors would either sanction this behavior by failing to intervene or allowing it in other ways, such as starting the training video and leaving the room for an extended period of time (Prokos and Padavic 2002). Finally, the recruits learned that it was acceptable and even beneficial to undermine women's authority by disobeying, disrespecting, and challenging only female instructors.

Like other educational institutions, police academies have a "hidden curriculum" (Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce 2010; Prokos and Padavic 2002). Scholars have demonstrated that hidden curricula in organizations reproduce gender inequality by outlining and reinforcing expected patterns of behavior for men and women (Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce 2010; Martin 1998). Academies also formally and informally teach recruits how to behave in the paramilitary system of policing with a rigid hierarchy and high expectations of compliance (Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce 2010; Prokos and Padavic 2002). This introduction to the paramilitary structure also instills in-group and out-group

dynamics and loyalty to fellow officers, which are key to police culture (Kraska and Cubellis 1997).

The experiences of participants in this study confirm prior findings. They described the police academy as their first exposure to the gendered environment of police agencies. Kim, 61, an officer in California, felt extremely visible during academy training: "I was there for three months and there were four of us [women] and like 50 guys. When we had finished, and I still remember this, the instructor said to 'I didn't think you women would make it.'" Kim was also the only Asian American woman and the best marksman in her class—the first woman to ever receive this designation at the police academy. Laura, 56, an officer in California, argued that Black women officers in particular experienced difficulties:

> One [woman] I knew went through all the training, academy and everything, but was denied her status as a sworn officer over and over. Just no reason. Then she eventually moved departments and you know what, she was promoted right away.

In this way, the police academy can act as another barrier to employment for women and people of color.

The police academy combines cultural norm setting and a structure that knowingly reproduces inequality by remaining deeply entrenched in police agencies; in many cases, the instructors are current or former police officers (Prokos and Padavic 2002). Some countries, such as Iceland, have reformed police academies from institutions operated by organizations affiliated with the police to four-year police education programs at higher education institutions (Fekjær and Petersson 2020). Although data has not yet determined whether this change has positively affected officer competence, this

provides one avenue through which the structure of the police academy could be amended to correct the gendered hidden curriculum.

On-the-Job Training

Past research has shown that police academy lessons are undermined by the maintenance of police culture (Ford 2003). This largely takes the form of "war stories" told by older officers with a longer tenure to new recruits that run counter to formal academy curriculum (Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce 2010; Ford 2003). In fact, one study found that over 80% of war stories told to new officers supported the existing police culture (Ford 2003). In Haarr's (1997:76) study, one participant explained, "At first I saw a difference in younger officers. I thought they must have had moms that work. But when they're here and they interact with the older ones with the macho mentality, they get just as bad as the other ones." More research is needed to uncover the specific ways in which the field training portion of police education contributes to the perpetuation of gender inequality.

In this study, participants reported negative experiences with field training. One participant in California detailed the contrast between the official regulations and the expectations of her field training officer (FTO). While other participants did not provide specific examples, five recalled having only male FTOs who engaged in traditionally masculine behaviors during training. Participants also noted that female trainees were particularly vulnerable to harassment and bullying during the field training period.

Only one participant discussed the ways in which her FTO flouted the official rules and training that she received at the academy. Julia, 55, an officer in California, described her on-the-job training as follows:

> I remember there was a guy in town […] he was a little mentally impaired, but he would get really angry at being stopped by the police. And he was really used as a training aid for most of the trainees—certainly the women—but most of the trainees to see how they stood up to him. Looking back on it, it was the worst kind of racial profiling you could have. There were a lot of things that I was trained to do that when I look back now I'm not very proud of. But at the time I wanted to keep my job and this is how I was trained and that's how I thought everybody else did their work.

Although Julia was the only participant to recount a specific example of FTO training that contradicted formal academy training, it is possible that other participants also experienced such incidents; because this sample skewed older than average, they may have limited recall of these events due to the intervening years.

Other participants described their experiences with their FTOs in negative terms; many were exposed to "macho" behavior in the form of shouting, and five participants noted the exclusively male FTO group. Gloria, 57, an officer in California, recounted, "No, I had all yellers. They all were men who yelled at me. They were all white men that yelled at me." Similarly, Jessica, 49, from Louisiana, only had male FTOs: "I did not have a female training officer. In fact, I don't think there were any at the time that were field training officers. Now we have several that are." Participants learned the structure and culture of policing during their field training but also that female officers were treated differently and needed to constantly prove themselves to gain acceptance from colleagues. Kelly, 46, an officer in Louisiana, experienced hazing immediately after her on-the-job training:

> They assigned me the same squad that I had trained on. So I knew everyone. So I was very comfortable when I started my first day without a training officer. And honestly we had all built up such a good rapport because they try to hassle you kind of like a hazing in a sense, but not like with alcohol or anything crazy like that. But they try to rattle you and they could never rattle me, they even put a letter in my mailbox that said I didn't pass the FTO program and I was to report to the chief of police to turn in my belongings. But I didn't [fall for it].

Kelly believed that this was a key moment in gaining the trust of male officers on her squad and developing a rapport with them; by remaining unbothered by their actions, she ceased to become a target. Thus, field training is as an important setting in the process of perpetuating gender inequality.

Gendered Pay Disparities Among Police Officers

As previously described, the gender pay disparity among police officers has existed since women first started to work in police agencies. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018) reported that, within a sample of 686 police officers and sheriff's department patrol officers, 559 were men and had median weekly earnings of $1,143, while 127 were women and had median weekly earnings of $922 (this data only included full-time salaried workers). In the same dataset, within a sample of 80 frontline supervisors of police officers and detectives, 71 were men and had median weekly earnings of $1,449, compared to the combined (men and women) median weekly income of $1,438 (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2018). Among 151 detectives and criminal investigators, 119 were men and had median weekly earnings of $1,472, compared to combined (men and women) median weekly earnings of $1,428.

Several factors may explain these discrepancies. According to devaluation theory (Petersen and Saporta 2004; Reskin 1988), roles filled by women are valued less than roles filled by men by society and are therefore paid less. This may impact women officers who perform "women's work" in policing, such as working with victims and children. Similarly, these assignments tend to be less prestigious in police agencies and are therefore less likely to lead to promotion and pay raises (Rabe-Hemp 2018). In some cases, women are also penalized when they take leave to care for children or elderly family members, as their seniority is reset when they return to work (Langan, Sanders and Agocs 2017; Rabe-Hemp 2018).

Based on income data from a 28-year period, Luo, Schleifer, and Hill (2019) found that, "while female police earn more than those in the general population, they earn around 14% less yearly income than male police, when averaged over the past 28 years" (p. 491). They also found that the gendered pay gap in policing remained relatively stable from 1990 to 2018 despite an increase in the number of women who entered policing. In 1990, the difference in pay was 84 cents on the dollar; in 2018, it was 86 cents on the dollar (Luo et al 2019). Finally, they found support for devaluation theory, as the gendered pay gap among police officers could not be explained through other job-related factors such as education or work experience (Luo et al 2019).

This finding contrasts with reports by participants in this study that there was no gender pay gap in their agency due to departmental regulations that resulted in raises purely based on collective bargaining agreements and clearly documented tenure and seniority measures. However, this gap may be explained by rules and regulations that

appear gender-neutral but have disparate effects in practice, which provides the illusion of fairness. Participants in Louisiana felt that all officers were equally underpaid. Susan, 52, cited pay as a major issue: "An officer at [my police agency] barely makes $30,000 a year to start. That's very low! We've lost a lot of officers to Texas. 'Cause Texas starts their officers around $70,000." When asked if women were paid less than men, Jessica, 49, replied, "No, no, it's all regulated and standardized based on seniority, being a female has nothing to do with it." Such responses were common among participants in both locations, with 16 out of 20 denying or downplaying gendered wage inequality in police agencies.

Among participants in California, pay was positively viewed overall. For example, Gloria, 57, had only positive remarks: "I thought I was always paid very well. I mean that's one of the reasons why I tried to convince people, especially women, to even now get into law enforcement. It's good pay! I mean, most places have unions and they fight for better pay, better benefits."

Luo et al. (2019:501) found that,

> Unions play a complex role in shaping gendered police compensation processes in which unions increase pay for males and females but also increase the gender pay gap among police. […] Moreover, the positive effects of unions among police have been starkly declining across the past 28 years.

Elvira and Saporta (2001) compared the gender pay gap across private sector jobs with and without union participation. They found that, overall, belonging to a labor union increased women's total pay and their pay in relation to men's pay (Elvira and Saporta 2001). However, they also found variations across industries, which they argued may result from American unions placing less emphasis on gender pay equity as a bargaining

issue than unions in Canada and the United Kingdom (Cook 1991; Elvira and Saporta 2001). It is also worth noting that women are largely absent from the executive ranks of many labor unions; when they do hold leadership roles, it is more likely to be at the local level (Cook 1991; Melcher et al 1992). Cohen and Huffman (2007) found that, among private sector workers, a higher number of women in management roles is correlated with the narrowing of the gender wage gap. However, little is known about women police officers' involvement with union leadership.

Police Uniforms

Police uniforms serve several functions. Uniforms visually separate the police from members of the public and confer the authority of the police agency onto the wearer (Joseph and Alex 1972). Police uniforms also represent a very powerful form of organizational control by strictly dictating an employee's appearance and sublimating their individual identity in favor of a group identity. This symbolic control also serves to create social distance between the group and outsiders (Bryant 1979) and begins during police academy training (Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce 2010). While the public's response to police officer uniforms has been well-documented, police officers' experiences of wearing a uniform is significantly less understood, especially among women.

When women began to perform police work in the early 1900s, they were not issued uniforms and, in some cases, were explicitly forbidden from wearing them (Appier 1998). This reinforced the division between policewomen or police matrons who performed "women's work" and their male counterparts, who were viewed as the "real"

police (Appier 1998, Rabe-Hemp 2018). In 1948, the LAPD adopted its first uniform for policewomen, which consisted of a dark blue skirt suit, a white blouse, and a hat and tie (Los Angeles Police Department 2018). Instead of wearing a gun belt or a holster, they were issued black leather purses that were designed to hold their guns and handcuffs. When other agencies were compelled to create a women's uniform in the 1970s, many departments reacted by requiring a separate women's uniform that aligned with gendered expectations of femininity by including skirts, pantyhose, and a handbag, while others responded by requiring women to dress like male officers (Appier 1998, Rabe-Hemp 2018). Female officers hired in the 1970s and 1980s reported being issued men's uniforms and paying to have them hemmed and altered to fit their bodies; this practice persists today, especially in smaller agencies (Rabe-Hemp 2018).

Participants in this study had three main responses to the experience of wearing a uniform. First, when given a man's uniform, they were reminded of their relative rarity among police officers. Participants also felt proud to wear the uniform and a sense of belonging. Finally, among women of color in the sample, the uniform represented a source of power and authority that they were not usually afforded in their day-to-day life.

In this sample, none of the participants were required to wear a stereotypically feminine uniform, but nine were issued men's uniforms. Julia, 55, an officer in California, recalls that, "in the '80s, they weren't comfortable at all. The vests weren't female bulletproof vests. It took quite a few years before they started making vests that fit women. And everything was heavy and it was tough." Heather, 46, an officer from Louisiana, described the uniform as something to be tolerated: "We wear a man's uniform

and that's for sure! And it's hard, you gotta figure out how to size yourself and whatnot. I don't know how you can come up with a female uniform because it's just the way it is, I mean, a bulletproof vest isn't meant for boobs." Participants described their uniforms as a daily reminder of their "otherness" at the police agency; they wore uniforms and equipment designed for men because officers are assumed to be men.

Kelly, 46, an officer in Louisiana, reported a deep attachment to her uniform: "I can't imagine not having my uniform on or a marked police unit. I identify as a police officer, that's who I am. I like to have the whole gun belt, the whole getup on and you carry yourself [differently] and they see that this is the police officer." As Kelly described, uniforms can also hide differences; people see a police officer, not necessarily a woman. Organizations achieve this uniformity by requiring workers to remove or conceal insignia that denote other identities, such as tattoos or political buttons (Joseph and Alex 1972; Stanley 1996). Kim, 61, an officer in California, was also proud of her uniform: "it's a symbol of pride. And I worked really hard to be able to wear it." Amy, 53, an officer in California, was more ambivalent: "I liked my uniform. I was proud of it. It was also annoying, uncomfortable, hot, not feminine." Thus, while most participants viewed the uniform as a symbol of pride and belonging, some believed that it conflicted with their identity as women.

For women of color, the experience of wearing a police uniform was unique. Gwen, 61, an officer from California, perceived it as a symbol of power and respect: "As a Black woman, people respect me a whole lot more when I have it on. They actually listen to what I say." For Gwen, the uniform provided authority that she did not

experience in her daily life. In her case, the uniform successfully denoted her status as a police officer first. Black women are disproportionately affected by uniform standards because many Black features are considered unprofessional, such as wearing natural or protective hairstyles (Kringen and Novich 2018).

Conclusion

The structure of police agencies' effect on gender inequality is an understudied area that requires further examination. Therefore, this chapter provided insight on how women officers perceive and experience several key structural components of police organizations. These structural inequalities did not occur by chance but were rather built into police agencies from their inception; moreover, they deepened with women's entry into policing roles. By tracing the history of police organizations in the United States through women's contemporary experiences, these findings provided important insight on structural gender inequality.

The paramilitary structure of modern policing, which features rigid rules and a strict hierarchy of power, disadvantages women officers, who overwhelmingly occupy lower-ranking positions and therefore have little institutional power. This study provided a novel perspective on the paramilitary structure by asking women officers about their experiences within this system. Many participants viewed the paramilitary structure of police agencies as a necessary compromise: not ideal, but the best option. Officers in the California sample were more willing to openly criticize this structure; when they reached higher ranks, they also tended to implement different management practices within their

own teams. This is in line with past research, which found that women officers are more likely to engage in participatory management styles than their male counterparts (Murray 2021; Silvestri 2007). Nevertheless, the security of a higher rank did not protect women, especially women of color, from contrapower harassment, which is also consistent with past research (Bonnes 2017).

Women officers in this study's sample entered police work through one of three pathways: the veteran preference in hiring, family connections in policing, or under a consent decree hiring initiative. Participants with prior military experience were more likely to work in Louisiana and found this experience to be beneficial to their policing careers, which is consistent with past findings (Morabito and Shelley 2018). Among participants with a family connection to policing, all of these connections were male police officers, and only one participant within this group identified as a person of color. Therefore, these connections are another mechanism through which certain groups—in this case, people of color—are excluded from police work. Consent decrees, a form of court-mandated affirmative action, were instrumental in the hiring of participants who were over age 50 or identified as people of color. While past literature has documented the ways in which physical fitness tests have been used to exclude women recruits, participants in this sample were more likely to experience obstacles in more subjective stages of hiring, such as interviews, psychological evaluations, and background checks. This is an interesting finding that requires further examination in the future.

After overcoming obstacles in the hiring process, women officers are then sent to the police academy and, if successful, to on-the-job training (i.e., field training).

Although efforts have been made to make the curriculum “gender-neutral,” the police academy is still linked with police agencies and staffed by current and former officers; thus, it is an environment in which many women experience a preview of the gendered world of police agencies (Prokos and Padavic 2002). The findings from this study support these past findings. Similarly, the field training program is often a stage in which FTOs contradict official rules and regulations taught at the police academy. Participants described encounters with aggressive male FTOs who frequently shouted and left new recruits vulnerable to bullying. Due to the higher median age within this sample, participants had limited recall of their experiences at the police academy and in field training, which is a limitation in the data.

The gender pay disparity among police officers is perhaps the most overt example of workplace structural gender inequality. However, despite data to the contrary, over 75% of participants denied experiencing wage inequality. This is an important finding that highlighted the power of institutional narratives of fairness in obfuscating gender inequality. Police unions play a complex role in the perpetuation of the gender pay gap, as belonging to a union has positive effects on women’s pay, but police unions (like many unions in the United States) do not explicitly support eliminating gender-based pay disparities (Elvira and Saporta 2001).

Finally, police uniforms serve as a key structural element that creates visual similarity and exerts organizational control over officers. In line with past findings, nine out of 20 participants were issued a man’s uniform and had to have it altered to fit them. Indeed, issuing men’s uniforms was one of two early responses to women’s entry into

police agencies, along with the creation of a stereotypically feminine women's uniform (Appier 1998; Rabe-Hemp 2018). Participants viewed their uniforms as a symbol of pride in being a woman who had overcome barriers to wear a police uniform. Moreover, for women of color in the sample, the police uniform was a symbol of institutional power, which gave them more authority than they would be afforded out of uniform. The relationship between police uniforms and workplace gender inequality and women officers' perspectives of their uniforms have received little scholarly attention, which makes these findings important contributions to the literature.

CHAPTER FOUR: EXPERIENCES OF GENDER INEQUALITY: INFORMAL BARRIERS TO ACCEPTANCE AND SUCCESS FOR WOMEN OFFICERS

Introduction

While structural factors contribute to the systemic gender inequality that women face in male-dominated occupations, more enduring factors in some cases are cultural in nature. For example, remedying a lack of parental leave policy may be relatively simple, but changing the organizational culture to be more accepting of workers who use such leave can be more challenging. In this chapter, I explore participants' experiences of cultural forms of sexual and gender bias, discrimination, and harassment. The shape of these cultural modes of gender inequality has been documented in past research; they include stereotypes and biases against women, including women of color and lesbian women, especially as they relate to female police officers (Jurik 1988; Kanter 1977; Martin 1980); gender and sexual harassment, including name calling, bullying, and derogatory jokes (Hunt 1990; Jacobs 1987; Martin 1980; Remmington 1983); stereotypically gendered job assignments and the funneling of women and people of color into less prestigious roles (Miller 1999; Morash and Haarr 2012; Palmiotto et al 2006); and the complications of motherhood for women officers, from pregnancy to childcare (Langan et al 2017; Martin 1991; Schulze 2011; Rabe-Hemp 2018). Together, these factors are both created by and reproduced in police agencies, which are gendered institutions, and perpetuate the unequal status quo (Acker 1990; Britton 2011).

This chapter links the reported experiences of participants to extant literature and provides several new contributions. This study corroborates previous research on cultural

forms of gender inequality experienced by women police officers by using more recent data and different geographical locations. In contrast to past studies, I find that being a mother impacts an officer's approach to her work rather than the other way around. Compared to women in police departments, women who work in sheriff's departments are more likely to experience blocked progression at work. Moreover, female officers of color are disproportionately asked to perform tasks involving communities of color and emotional labor than their white female counterparts and men of color. Finally, in contrast to the findings from Chapter Three, location does not appear to predict or explain cultural forms of gender inequality in police agencies. Participants in both California and Louisiana were equally likely to experience the modes of inequality discussed in the following sections.

Informal Barriers to Acceptance and Success for Women Officers

Acker (1990) argued that gender inequality in the workplace occurs on multiple levels and described all organizations as gendered: "The structure of the labor market, relations in the workplace, the control of the work process, and the underlying wage relation are always affected by symbols of gender, processes of gender identity, and material inequalities between women and men" (1990:145). Furthermore, she highlighted three ways in which gender inequality is created and sustained. First, divisions of power, labor, and socially acceptable behaviors occur along gender lines. Second, cultural images, ideologies, and language are used to maintain these divisions. Finally, organizational processes reinforce gendered components of individual identity, including

choices of gender-appropriate work roles and self-presentation (Acker 1990). Ridgeway (2007) outlined a different understanding of gender and work in which both the organization's mission and an employee's role shape expectations of an individual's work behaviour. Gender is a background identity at work, while occupational identity is foregrounded (Ridgeway 2007). However, for women police officers, occupational and gender identities cannot be disentangled. They face a wide variety of barriers due to their gender, which impede their work satisfaction and success. These include tokenism and gender-based stereotypes, sexual harassment, career penalties arising from motherhood, and gender-based job or role segregation or "women's work." Women officers of color also face unique barriers based on the intersection of race- and gender-based stereotyping and role segregation.

Tokenism and Gender-Based Stereotypes

Kanter (1977) used the concept of tokenism to describe the experiences of women in male-dominated occupations. She argued that the negative consequences experienced by women is attributable to their low representation in the workplace and that their status as tokens would be eliminated and their treatment would improve if more women were hired. The first element of tokenism is heightened visibility and scrutiny of minority group members, accompanied by increased performance pressures. Tokens are not seen as individual people but rather as representatives of their "group." Boundary heightening, or exaggeration of the differences between tokens and dominants, furthers the divide between the in-group and the out-group. This leads to the further isolation of tokens from

both the dominant group and other tokens, as they attempt to avoid further negative attention. Finally, tokens feel constrained by gendered expectations or workplace and social behaviors. Such expectations lead to role traps or controlling images of women workers that reflect stereotypes and restrict their identities at work (Kanter 1977).

Jurik (1988) applied Kanter's role traps in a study of female correctional officers. In the first role trap, the "pet," female officers are seen as too trusting or lenient with inmates and weak and in need of protection during physical altercations. In the second role trap, the "seductress," women are seen as incompetent but manipulative and as using their sexuality to rise in the ranks. The third role trap, the "iron maiden," describes women who are seen as overly careerist and cold; they are either asexual or labeled as a "bitch" or a "dyke." Finally, in the "mother" role trap, female officers who assume traditionally feminine assignments or tasks are seen as nurturing or scolding but not tough or competent enough to participate in "real" work (Jurik 1988).

Martin (1980) built on Kanter's theory of tokenism to create a typology of POLICEwomen and policeWOMEN. This dichotomy identifies how women officers experience conflict between sex roles and the masculine structure and culture of police work. POLICEwomen refers to police officers first; such women are described as overachievers who emphasize masculine traits to assimilate into the larger police culture. They actively attempt to counter stereotypes about women's ineptitude by competing with men in traditional policing tasks. By contrast, policeWOMEN accept and even lean into their perceived feminine characteristics by willingly performing "women's work" or accepting gendered job assignments. Perhaps surprisingly, policeWOMEN are more

likely to be accepted by their male coworkers because they do not challenge existing gender stereotypes. Whereas POLICEwomen enact a form of masculinity, policeWOMEN emphasize their femininity. More recently, female police officers have described a greater ability to combine these identities into new adaptive strategies (Rabe-Hemp 2009) that involve reframing feminine behaviors (e.g., communication, building trust, and de-escalation) as being beneficial to the current demands of policing and emphasizing selective masculine traits such as "putting hands on" and "getting dirty" (Rabe-Hemp 2009: 125).

However, Corsianos (2009) found that women officers continue to "experience pressure to conform to the patriarchal culture that encourages machismo and masculine traits" (100). Like Martin's POLICEwomen, Corsianos argued that female officers may respond to the masculine police culture by attempting to assimilate by "proving themselves," being a "team player," gaining the trust of male coworkers, and sublimating any feminine characteristics to be seen as "one of the guys." In some cases, this also requires women (and people of color) to ignore racist and sexist comments and jokes on the job. Miller, Forest, and Jurik (2004) suggested that lesbian women may be more successful than their heterosexual female counterparts in their attempts to assimilate by downplaying their sexuality and emphasizing certain masculine traits.

The consequences of tokenism impact female officers' job satisfaction; women who worked in agencies with 15% or more women had lower levels of depression, higher self-esteem, and greater job satisfaction than those in agencies with fewer women (Krimmel and Gormley 2003). Thus, not being a token appears to improve women's

experiences in policing. In line with Kanter's assertion that tokens experience heightened visibility and scrutiny, female officers have reported the need to work harder than male colleagues to "prove themselves" while simultaneously being used by their superiors as evidence of the agency's women-friendly hiring practices (Archbold and Schulz 2008: 63). Women officers' ability to achieve promotion is also impacted by gender stereotypes, as prestigious assignments and departments (e.g., investigations and homicide) are among the most hostile to female officers (Archbold and Schulz 2008).

Sexual Harassment

Workplace sexual harassment is recognized as a form of sexual discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. Legally, it takes two forms. The first is *quid pro quo*, in which sexual propositions are made in exchange for desirable work outcomes; if the victim declines, she may face adverse work outcomes. The second is a *hostile work environment*, in which an organization creates or sustains an environment of harassing conduct that is pervasive and severe enough to constitute abuse (Gregory 2003). Sexual harassment occurs for several reasons and perpetuates workplace gender inequality. As MacKinnon (1979:9) observed, "the sexual harassment of women can occur largely because women occupy inferior job positions and job roles; at the same time, sexual harassment works to keep women in such positions." McLaughlin et al. (2017) documented the connection between early-career workplace sexual harassment to later financial stress and negatively affects women's career trajectory. In police agencies in particular, male officers responded aggressively when women first achieved full

inclusion in policing (Remmington 1983). Studies have documented the ways in which sexism is taught and enforced in police agencies, beginning with the police academy (Prokos and Padavic 2002). Sexual harassment is also used to maintain a gendered in-group and out-group, which perpetuates male dominance (Hunt 1990).

Sexual harassment continues to be prevalent in police agencies (Martin 1980; Rabe-Hemp 2018). The introduction of more women police officers has done little to change these barriers at a macro level (Remmington 1983). A common form of sexual harassment is intimidation through verbal taunting and derogatory jokes and comments made by male officers (Jacobs 1987). Such verbal harassment represents a significant source of work-related stress for female officers (Haarr and Morash 2005). Sexual harassment and other sexist workplace behaviours also affect female officers' views of other women. For example, Remmington (1983) found that many women officers became inured to the masculine culture of policing and internalized sexist rhetoric and stereotypes.

Motherhood Penalties

Parenthood, especially motherhood, is accompanied by obstacles to success in the paid labor force due to the conflicting roles of caregiver and worker. Mothers are especially affected because of the high prevalence of women who act as primary caregivers to children. Acker (1990) argued that jobs are structured around an ideal worker who is entirely committed to their work and has no personal or social obligations. She clarified, "The closest the disembodied worker doing the abstract job comes to a real

worker is the male worker whose life centers on his full-time, life-long job, while his wife or another woman takes care of his personal needs and his children" (Acker, 1990:149). Therefore, paid work is gendered since the definition of the ideal worker is an impossible standard for many women to meet.

When an employee becomes pregnant, her status as a mother and therefore a less ideal worker becomes acutely visible to others. Women officers must not only worry about the physical dangers that their work presents to them and their fetus, such as violence, car accidents, and blood-borne diseases (Rabe-Hemp 2018), but they are also concerned about the professional ramifications of their pregnancy. Langan and colleagues (2017) documented the scrutiny that female officers face based on the timing of a pregnancy. Male colleagues view women who become pregnant before they "make rank" (i.e., receive their first promotion) as non-contributing employees who are only there to take repeated maternity leaves (Langan et al 2017). Similarly, when a female officer announces her pregnancy, she becomes a "liability" in the eyes of fellow officers (Langan et al 2017: 241). While men are congratulated when their status as a future father is known, women are informally punished. Some women have responded to this negative attention by refusing to take time off for medical appointments to mitigate comments from male coworkers about being needy and incompetent (Rabe-Hemp 2018).

Pregnant police officers were first legally protected from job loss by the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, which requires equal treatment of employees with a temporary disability (e.g., a broken leg) and employees "disabled" by pregnancy and childbirth. Under this act, if a male officer was granted accommodations for a reason

other than pregnancy, a pregnant female officer was legally entitled to the same accommodations. These accommodations for temporary disability are referred to as "light duty" work. However, subsequent legal challenges and precedents have blurred the types of light duty work that are considered acceptable by the courts (Rabe-Hemp 2018).

Due to the relatively low number of women police officers and the even lower number of women who become pregnant during their tenure, many agencies do not have a codified set of practices or standards for assigning light duty work. In many cases, when a pregnant employee is moved to light duty work, the particulars of this work is left up to the discretion of her manager (Rabe-Hemp 2018). Martin (1991) identified three key issues that should be standardized across police agencies to thwart discrimination: the point at which a pregnant officer is no longer able or allowed to continue her regular work, who decides the light duty work that should be performed by the pregnant officer, and which light duty assignments are considered acceptable for a pregnant officer. Furthermore, because light duty is not standardized, several female police officers have been forced to take unpaid leave when they are no longer considered able to perform their regular duties (Rabe-Hemp 2018).

When light duty work is assigned to pregnant officers, the caliber of the work is relevant and affects one's status. Schulze (2010) found that, if the light duty work has less perceived prestige than a pregnant officer's regular work and is menial in nature, pregnant officers are more likely to view it as a form of punishment. Similarly, Langan et al. (2017) found that light duty work is stigmatized as a lowly role that no other officers would willingly perform, such as working the front desk at a police station. Light duty

work also contributes to what Rabe-Hemp (2018: 133) termed the "pregnancy penalty," in which women who accept light duty work or leave during or after their pregnancy lose a year of seniority; this affects their ability to ascend ranks or pay levels. The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993 requires employers above a certain size to allow employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave within one year of their child's birth. However, this leave is unpaid and does not require the employer to guarantee the employee's role when they return to work. This means that many female officers are concerned about the role that they will be assigned when they return to work (Rabe-Hemp 2018).

Many police agencies require officers to work rotating shifts and be constantly available for unexpected overtime or emergency call ups. This strains family relationships for all officers but especially women since it means that they must struggle to find childcare on short notice and at unusual times (Agocs et al 2015; Martin and Jurik 2007). Brown (1998) concluded that managers expect officers to prioritize work above all other aspects of their lives; since women are culturally expected to prioritize their children, this creates role conflict and ultimately leads to mothers failing to meet their manager's expectations (also Sugden (2005). Some female officers who are mothers respond to this conflict by separating their home and work lives as much as possible to minimize stigma from male colleagues, including avoiding any mention of their children or caregiving duties (Holdaway and Parker 1998). Luhr's (2020) study on the service sector showed that, due to motherhood penalties, mothers (especially Black mothers) often choose not to disclose their status as parents to their employers. Furthermore, some

women conceal their need for childcare as a reason for missing work and instead elect to use sick time to avoid stigma from employers and coworkers (Luhr 2020).

"Women's Work" and Gender-Based Role Segregation

Occupational gender segregation describes the ways in which certain jobs are predominately held by either men or women. It relies on and perpetuates existing cultural images of what is considered "men's work" and "women's work" (England 2005). At both the occupation and job levels, gender segregation is a cause and an outcome of workplace gender inequality (Bielby and Baron 1986). However, research has demonstrated that job-level gender segregation is more pervasive than occupational gender segregation and more impactful on women's outcomes in the job market (Bielby and Baron 1986). Organizational hierarchies are products of occupational gender segregation, but they are usually sustained by interactions between workers rather than structural practices (Bielby and Baron 1986). Gender-based stereotyping plays a key role in reinforcing occupational segregation.

Both workers and employers rely on cultural expectations of men and women in the workplace. Employers discriminate in hiring and promotions by relying on culturally accepted ideas of the types of roles that suit men and women (England 2005). Similarly, workers use gender to understand their own work, which can lead to the harassment of women who occupy roles defined as "men's work." Conversely, when hiring women, employers value certain female workers above other women or men for roles considered "women's work" (Reskin 1991). Occupational gender segregation especially harms

women because, as argued under devaluation theory, work that is deemed suitable and most appropriate for women is understood to be less valuable, productive, and skilled (England 2005). This results in "women's work" being afforded less respect and monetary compensation.

Community policing emerged in the 1980s and has become the dominant form of policing in the United States (Miller 1999). However, a problem with the popularity of community policing is the dilution of its initial tenets of proactive problem solving, positive community interactions, and the decentralization of police institutions. In police agencies, the move to community policing has created more roles that are compatible with traits commonly associated with femininity, such as collaboration, caregiving, and communication (Miller 1999). Female officers have argued that they are better able to employ de-escalation and communication skills with community members than male officers (Miller 1999; Rabe-Hemp 2009). However, the rise of community policing efforts also coincided with the militarization of the police (Kraska 2007). Thus, while female officers and officers of color were tasked with roles related to community policing, white male officers disproportionately occupied roles in more militarized divisions, such as SWAT teams (Miller 1999; Rabe-Hemp 2018). The "soft policing" roles filled by women and officers of color were viewed as less prestigious and therefore less likely to result in consideration for promotion (Miller 1999; Rabe-Hemp 2009). Finally, the "old boys' club" inherent to police culture perpetuates occupational gender segregation through the social exclusion of female officers, which prevents them from

networking and receiving mentoring in the same way as male colleagues (Martin 1980; Weisheit 1987).

Gender- and Race-Based Stereotypes and Job Role Segregation

The maintenance of the existing social hierarchy in police agencies requires the exclusion and segregation of both women and people of color. One way in which this segregation occurs is by directing people of color (especially Black and Latinx people) into racialized occupations, which also precludes them from consideration for more prestigious roles (Tomaskovic-Devey 1993). In many occupations, this translates to Black employees performing jobs in which they work with other Black people, whether as clients or coworkers (Collins 1993). Devaluation theory is also applicable in this context, as scholars have documented the fact that the number of African Americans who perform a given role corresponds with lower earnings for the job in question (Tomaskovic-Devey 1993).

In police agencies, Black and Latinx officers are more likely than their white counterparts to be assigned to patrol high-crime and high-risk areas, which results in higher levels of danger and workplace-related stress (Palmiotto et al 2006). Black police officers are also segregated in terms of coworking arrangements, as agencies routinely assign Black officers to work with other officers of color (Palmiotto et al 2006). In both cases, officers of color are excluded from promotional opportunities due to a lack of informal interactions with (white) supervisors and having to fulfill low-prestige assignments. As both women and people of color, female officers of color experience

interlocking and unique forms of discrimination, bias, and harassment. Nationally, police agencies are predominantly male and white, which leaves women of color as outsiders in two ways (Texeira 2002). Women officers of color have reported both exclusion from other women due to their race and exclusion from male members of the same racial group due to their gender (Owen 1988).

Reported Experiences of Workplace Gender Inequality

Experiences of Tokenism and Gender-Based Stereotypes

One major stereotype that affects women officers is what Kanter (1977) referred to as "the seductress" or what Rabe-Hemp (2018) described as the "badge bunny." Male officers sexualize their female colleagues, and women face heightened scrutiny in their interactions with men while at work. In addition, the belief that women can only progress in their careers by exchanging sexual favors with male superiors accompanies this stereotype. Catherine, 64, an officer in Louisiana, was told the following in her first interview for a police department: "if you're here to have sex with all the men here, then you're out!" She said that this statement remained with her because she found it to be shocking. This stereotype also undergirds the trope that, when women succeed in the workplace, it is due to the exchange of sexual favors or "sleeping her way to the top" (Hunt 1990).

However, it is not only male officers who perpetuate these stereotypes. Two participants described questioning whether other female officers were "here for the right reasons." For example, Amy, 53, an officer in California, observed,

> There's some people that don't get onto the job for the same reasons, and some of them are out to impress boys. And so you'll get these women coming in who are very flirtatious, and you go "why are you here? Is this a career choice for you or is this a social thing?"

Studies have found that female officers may internalize the sexist narratives common to their workplaces over time (Remmington 1983). Heightened concerns about the behavior and motivations of other women in the workplace may also reflect the stress experienced by tokens (Kanter 1977).

The sexualization of female officers also assumes that heterosexual women are overtly sexual or open to advances from male colleagues; when advances are rebuffed, many women are assumed to be lesbians, regardless of their sexual identity. Kelly, 46, an officer in Louisiana, described this process: "'Cause a lot of females come on the department and they get labeled. Like when people see them, they'll say 'oh, she's gay' or, you know, 'she's going to sleep around with all the cops until she gets one and leaves the department.'" Hunt (1990) asserted that, by reducing female officers to a dichotomy between a sexual object or a lesbian (and therefore off limits or unfeminine), male officers reduce women to categories that reinforce male dominance.

Finally, some participants coped with these stereotypes by adhering to heteronormative expectations of self-presentation. Gwen, 61, an officer in California, observed, "I do encounter some females [officers] who think they'll become men if they don't show their assets." Rabe-Hemp (2009) found that some female officers resist coworkers' assumptions that they may be lesbians by emphasizing their femininity in their physical appearance at work. Similarly, Martin's (1980) description of policeWOMEN documented that some female officers change both their behavior and

their appearance to emphasize their adherence to recognized ideals of femininity. Some female officers engage in feminine-coded grooming practices, such as wearing makeup and coloring and styling their hair, as a way to outwardly display their heterosexuality and adherence to existing gender appearance norms.

A second major stereotype that affects women officers is the assumption that they are "bitchy," cold, and unfeeling if they are serious about their work or assertive. This corresponds with the POLICEwomen label developed by Martin (1980), whereby female officers who refuse to engage in traditionally feminine behaviors at work and instead compete with male colleagues are less likely to be accepted by them. Similarly, Kanter's (1977) "iron maiden" role trap highlights the ways in which women who are seen as too ambitious or serious about their work are labeled asexual, cold, and "bitchy" by male colleagues (also Jurik 1988). Amy, 53, an officer in California, has experienced this in two unique ways:

> If you come across too aggressive, then they think you're a bitch, they don't want to work with you. And if you come across too nice and kind, they don't think you have what it takes to go out into the field. So there's a more narrow spectrum of how you're supposed to present yourself in an interview panel than a man. There's a definite bias and double standard of what [interview panels] want from male and female applicants. I've sat on panels with people, and they're saying, "Well, I did not like the answer she gave to this question." I said, "Well, wait a minute. That's the same answer that that man gave two hours ago. Why is it now not okay, because it's her answer?" [They respond] "Well, she came across kind of aggressive, or whatever." I'm like, "Well, but what do you want a female officer to do?" People have their stereotypes, right? And it's like the stereotyped female officer is tough, gay, a bitch.

Amy's perspective provides unique insight on the perniciousness and persistence of these stereotypes. Discrimination by supervisors and administrators is a major concern for

female officers, given their power over promotions and job assignments (Gossett and Williams 1998).

One of the original arguments against allowing women to work patrol roles was based on the belief that they were not strong and authoritative enough to successfully perform their duties (Balkin 1988). This created pressure on women to be more serious and assertive at work, which further perpetuates "iron maiden" stereotypes. Becky, 48, an officer in Louisiana, recalled,

> I remember when I first started, our chief of enforcement said, he goes, "They will respect you more if you're a bitch versus a pushover." I'm not wanting to just be bitchy just to be bitchy. But I was, I was firm, you know, and I had to let them know like, I'm not playing, and I didn't, that I will tell you what I expect of you.

Forcing women into stereotypical categories of oversexed and promiscuous or asexual and defeminized is also serves a way in which male officers reproduce the gendered status quo and seek to maintain their superiority (Hunt 1990). Hunt argued, "The reproduction of a gendered social order through the degradation of women functions to preserve the policeman's identity as a cop and a man" (1990:21).

Another major stereotype that female officers encounter at work is the assumption that they are incompetent because they are women. Jamieson (1995) described the femininity/competence bind, in which women who are considered traditionally feminine are considered incompetent and women who are considered competent are considered unfeminine or not "real" women. Julia, 55, an officer from California, described a common theme in her encounters with civilians. They would say, "'When's the real cop gonna get here? I want a male cop.' Or 'Send a real cop, you're just playing dress up,'

that kind of stuff." If a male officer does arrive, "he doesn't correct them or anything. And I'll hear about it later [from the other men]." With regard to gender-based discrimination, Gossett and Williams (1998) found that one major complaint among women officers was that male colleagues did not take them seriously or believe that they were equals at work.

Hunt (1990) outlined the "police myth," in which male police officers believe that their work only involves crime fighting; this illusion conceals the demeaning or boring parts of their roles. Women's presence threatens the image that male officers have created for themselves, which leads some male officers to believe that the inclusion of female officers lowers the public image of policing as a whole (Hunt 1990; Martin 1980). A major stereotype that affects female officers in relation to the "police myth" is that female police officers are not as physically strong as male officers and therefore incompetent. Tammy, 64, an officer in Louisiana, elaborated, "Some people, mostly men, and even some women to a certain extent, don't believe that we're strong enough or smart enough, we don't have the physical skills to do the job, and it's just not true!" Schulze (2012) found that, although physical fitness tests are ubiquitous in police hiring and training, they are not scientifically based and rely on essentialist ideas of gender. Furthermore, no correlation has been found between fitness test scores and policing ability. Nevertheless, they continue to perpetuate gender inequality in police agencies.

Similarly, because female officers are tokens, they face heightened visibility and scrutiny, and mistakes or missteps are more visible than those of male colleagues (Kanter, 1977). Tina, 59, an officer in Louisiana, asserted, "All females can be blamed

for what one is like. There was one female and she would say ‘Oh I won’t touch blood.’ Well that made the rest of us look bad.” The association between police work and violence and the risk of harm reflects the traditionally masculine image of the police. When a woman officer rejects these facets of the job, it reinforces the view that women and femininity are incompatible with police work. Jamieson’s (1995) femininity/competence binary includes a dynamic in which successful women are seen as an exception to the category of woman; their success is attributed to external factors (e.g., luck or ease of tasks), whereas men’s success is attributed to internal factors (e.g., intelligence and ability). Morash and Haarr (2012:17) described this dynamic in police agencies: “In many police departments, officers undermine women as a group by constantly examining and questioning their performance, denigrating their work efforts, magnifying their failures, and assuming that one woman’s shortcomings indicate all women’s shortcomings.” Similarly, when women make useful suggestions, the latter are more likely to be discounted or downplayed than when male officers make the same suggestions. Amy, 53, an officer in California, relayed two related experiences:

> I used to say I had a voice only dogs and other women could hear. Because I'd go to a meeting and say something and no one would hear me. And two weeks later, some guy would say, “Hey, I had this great idea.” I'm like, “I just said that.” I was the one that set up our Facebook and Twitter and all that stuff. Everyone was like, “That's not a thing. That's not going to last, that's a fad.” And now all they do is post all the time. Like, “I told you guys, if you tell people what we do, they will be even more supportive.”

Amy experienced both the attribution of her ideas to male colleagues and the diminishment of her contributions as “a fad.”

Some participants attempted to avoid gendered stereotypes by assimilating to the behavior of their male colleagues. Five participants described feeling pressure to become “one of the guys” at work. Julia, 55, an officer in California, explained,

> I think because, as a woman, a lot of us wanna be like one of the guys. Right? And we, we change our behavior, we change our ... even sometimes the way we look. We downplay our femininity to be accepted by the guys because we have to. In those [early] days, especially, you had to get along with the guys, because your life depended on it.

When asked to elaborate on her final point, Julia cited the need for male coworkers to help or provide backup in potentially life-threatening emergency situations. There is strong pressure to conform to the dominant masculine culture of policing and can lead some women officers to downplay traditionally feminine aspects of themselves (Corsianos 2009). Denissen (2010) found a similar pattern among women in the building trades. She argued that women “may act masculine in an effort to gain membership by showing that they are not different from men (or not *as* different as the men claim)” (Denissen 2010:1059).

Similarly, to be seen as a “team player,” female officers are expected to ignore sexist jokes and other inappropriate work discussions (Corsianos 2009). Heather, 46, an officer in Louisiana, observed differences in her male colleagues’ conduct around female civilians and female officers:

> They try to behave a little better, and by that I mean that they're not talking about penises or poop. Because they still cuss and they're still obnoxious, but they will take it down a notch. Now there's a civilian employee female comes in, then they're way more well-behaved. If you're a female officer you're expected to suck it up and put up with obnoxious behavior. Whereas the [female] civilians, they treat them more like real people.

To be “team players,” women officers are forced to “prove themselves” to their male colleagues by taking on extra work (Archbold and Schulz 2008) to be respected or promoted. This practice is discussed in greater depth in the following sections, which focus on “women’s work” and gender-based role segregation.

Sexual Harassment

Of the 20 female officers in the sample, 19 reported experiencing some form of sexual harassment. The harassment took the form of crude or sexual jokes, propositions for dates or sexual activities, assault in the form of grabbing or touching, sabotaging female officers during job tasks, and retaliation for complaints.

Nine participants described experiences of gender-based bullying and hazing at work. In seven out of nine cases, this involved the use of derogatory terms for women. For example, Julia, 55, an officer in California, relayed the following experience:

> I worked on midnight shift. I'd been promoted once, and we had a whole team of women on midnight shift. That was for one rotation shift. So it was like for six months. We were just all … they were all women. We had a lot more fun and we, um, we had each other’s back. But we were also called, by the guys on the other shifts, the C-Squad, and we were split into A, B, and C Squad. That was the structure of the patrol shifts. Days, midnight, swings all had A, B, and C Squads. Well, we were [officially] called the C Squad, but the guys called us the “Cunt Squad.”

Participants describe similar verbal harassment as “constant” and a fixture of police agencies. Sexually charged and/or derogatory jokes and comments may be underreported by female officers due to their ubiquity (Texeira 2002). When asked if she experienced name calling from colleagues, Tammy, 64, an officer in Louisiana, responded, “Too many times to count.”

Two participants described clear experiences of hazing at the beginning of their careers. Becky, 48, an officer in Louisiana, detailed the following experience:

> One of the first nights at work, we went and worked over down the bayou and along the bayou are these trashy little strip clubs. And so my supervisor, I guess, thought it was gonna be a shock value, "We're gonna take Becky to every strip club and 'zoo inspection.'" He didn't know me well enough. Like, I'm not gonna be offended by that.

Becky understood this to be a test since she was one of the very few women at her agency at the time. Kanter (1977) argued that tokens may be required to pass "loyalty tests" set by the dominant group; if the token fails the test, she faces further isolation. Gwen, 61, an officer in California, also experienced hazing at work. However, unlike Becky, her experience was more dangerous. Gwen recalled, "I was purposely under-staffed and refused backup on calls. I'd call it in and no one would come… after that I was extra-vigilant. I followed all the policies and I documented everything!" Martin (1980) found that, within the first wave of women officers at American police agencies, overexposure to dangerous beats and a lack of backup were key ways in which male officers attempted to sabotage their new female colleagues.

Becky also described a unique experience of finding out a male supervisor was attempting to pit the only two women in the agency against each other. She recounted,

> When I started, there was only one other female in the agency. And she and I are still good friends today. But our supervisor tried to stir the pot. Like I remember him telling me, "She doesn't like you, you know." Like, well why are you telling me that? You know, what's the benefit of that anyway? You're just causing conflict.

Isolating women from each other prevents them from engaging in mentoring or supportive relationships and upholds their subordinate status. Some male supervisors

prevent women from working together or informally socializing at work to maintain the gendered status quo (Martin 1980). However, more recent research has found that women are better able to engage in social support by forming informal mentorship networks and engaging in advocacy when female officers reach a senior rank (Murray 2021).

Motherhood Penalties

Of the seven participants who are mothers (35% of the sample), three had children before entering law enforcement, one had stepchildren, and three gave birth to at least one child while working as police officers. Furthermore, the three women who had children during their tenure as police officers are all gave birth at least 17 years ago, which prevents comparison of experiences based on generation. The first obstacle that many pregnant officers face is when and how to notify their workplace of their pregnancy and request light duty accommodation. Amy, 53, an officer in California, is a single mother of twins and described her experience when she decided to request light duty work:

> That was a big deal. Because I was working patrol when I found out I was pregnant, and it was not really something I was expecting to occur. And one of my best friends, we were working together on patrol, and he called for emergency backup. And so, I'm broke. I knew I was pregnant, but I hadn't told anybody. And I started driving to the call. And I'm driving really fast, because my friend is calling for help, and I'm getting lights and siren. I come whipping around the corner, I get there. And as I'm driving, I'm thinking, "What is happening now to my body from this response is probably really not good for my baby." I'm like, "This is really bad." So I dealt with the situation, we got the guy arrested, I drove to the station. I told my sergeant right then, "I need to come off the street. I'll get a doctor's note, whatever." Because at that time, there hadn't been a lot of women that were pregnant, and they freaked out. They never knew what to do. And so I had already researched it. And I knew that the doctor just had to write me a note that said, one or two things that I couldn't do, because I was pregnant, that would

> preclude me from working patrol, which was lifting over 50 pounds. It didn't have to be very complicated. So I did that. So then they put me on light duty, which was fine. I had been a detective before, so I went back and did detective work.

Thus, when it became obvious to Amy that she could no longer perform her regular duties while pregnant (and because this was not a common occurrence in her department), she made the decision herself to request light duty. However, the point at which pregnant officers are considered unfit to continue their regular duties is not standardized, which has led to considerable variation in the experiences of pregnant women on duty (Martin 1991; Rabe-Hemp 2018). For Amy, the light duty assignment was not a clear demotion, which is not true for many female officers (Langan et al 2017; Rabe-Hemp 2018). Furthermore, in some cases, a pregnant officer is forced to take leave if a department cannot find appropriate light duty work for her. This was the case for Tammy, 64, an officer in Louisiana:

> Only my younger daughter was born while I was working [as an officer], and at that time [34 years ago] no one knew what to do. I just kept working my regular patrol until I struggled to get in and out of the cruiser, then I took all of my stored-up time [vacation, sick time, etc.].

Childcare presents another challenge for officers who are mothers. Most police roles involve shift work, unscheduled overtime, and other unpredictable requests that are especially taxing on parents (Agocs et al 2015; Martin and Jurik 2007). More predictable hours tend to be associated with senior roles, which means that many officers are past childbearing age, or low-prestige roles that are considered “women’s work,” such as school resource officer or public relations liaison. Kelly, 46, an officer in Louisiana, has two biological children and two stepchildren and described the complications of childcare:

> It was difficult to have, especially small children when you're a police officer in a two police officer family. Um, my ex-husband and I worked opposite rotation of each other. So, that one was always home. Like we have A shift and B shift. So, when he was working weekdays, I was working weekends. So, uh, the only day that all police officers work is Friday. So on Friday, we would have to reach out to his parents and we would usually meet halfway because they lived about an hour from where we lived. So, there was only one day that we had to struggle with and that's a good thing. Um, and the department worked with us to keep us on opposite shifts.

Similarly, Amy described her struggle to find childcare on short notice as a single mom:

> When I was a sergeant, we were extremely short-handed. So what you would do is, you worked, a lot of people were working mandatory overtime, because you had to have minimum staffing. And when patrol officers are hustling, call to call to call, and then they get ordered, "Oh, by the way, it's four o'clock, you're supposed to be off at four o'clock. Yeah, somebody called in sick on the next shift. You're ordered to stay till nine." And it happened all the time. As a sergeant, you had to be there half an hour early every day. So it was a 10-hour shift, but had to be there half an hour early. So I was getting to work at 5:30 in the morning. You had to be dressed in uniform at 5:30, so I'd have to leave at 5:00. Well, when I was working that shift, my kids were in elementary school. So I'd hire somebody to come to the house. And I hired this young man who was in college, he was a friend of a friend and he'd come over here in his pajamas basically, fresh in the morning, and just crash on the couch until the kids got up at 7:00, and then he'd get them ready and take them to school. But here's what would happen: graveyard sergeant calls in sick, I'm the day shift sergeant. So I'll get a call at 6:00pm, "Graveyard sergeant called in sick. You need to come in at 2:00 in the morning." So now I've just found out I've got to go to work at 2:00 in the morning and I've got two little kids, I'm a single parent.

Kelly engaged in what Agocs and colleagues (2015) termed "off-shifting," in which parents trade off caregiving obligations to accommodate shift work. However, this is not ideal, as parents must sacrifice time as a family and time together. Two other participants, Stephanie and Tammy, both relied on support from their extended family (usually mothers and grandmothers) to provide childcare on short notice and at irregular hours. By contrast, Amy was forced to choose the more expensive option of paid childcare due to a lack of co-parental and extended family help.

Participants also described how being a parent changed (or did not change) their mental or emotional approach to their work. For Amy, the changes were immediate:

> I tried to go back to work, [the twins] were five months old, and I was a wreck. I was an absolute wreck, because I kept thinking I was going to get killed. And I had these babies. What was I thinking?! It took probably six months for me to fully re-acclimate. I would go to work, but I was so anxious all the time about everything, and it probably affected how I did my job. It probably affected my thought processes, [making me] more careful, being more cautious. But having kids definitely changes your whole outlook on it, which is why ultimately I went for promotion.

While Amy's concerns served as an impetus to change her role at work, other participants described enduring their current role after returning to work. For example, certain cases impacted Stephanie, 41, an officer in Louisiana, differently as a parent: "Child cases, like abuse or sex crimes, those stick with me, and I know it's because I'm a mom." From Stephanie's perspective, her male colleagues were not as affected by cases involving children, a difference that she attributed to motherhood. Conversely, Kelly argued that motherhood did not change her approach to her work:

> I can't even explain very well why [it doesn't affect me]. I work crime scenes. I work baby deaths, I work abused children, stuff like that. And when, when a child or baby dies, I don't sit there and lose my mind and cry because I have children. My children aren't in that situation. So, I keep myself very removed. And I like to tell people that I have formed so many compartments in my brain and it's like a file cabinet. And I just file away things and go on about my business. I'm a little bit more callous than others because I deal with crime scene work.

While some past research has addressed how being a police officer impacts women's approach to mothering (Agocs et al 2015; Langan et al 2017), less is known about the inverse.

Participants also described hostility from male colleagues and supervisors over their status as mothers. Past research has demonstrated that police work is arranged in

such a manner that women who are primary caregivers cannot meet their manager's expectations due to the belief that they should be completely devoted to their work (Brown 1998; Sugden 2005). Women officers face criticism for becoming pregnant, the timing of the pregnancy, taking leave, and taking time off to care for their children after infancy (Langan et al 2017). Women have also reported being described as receiving "special treatment" by male colleagues when accommodations were made for childcare responsibilities (Schulze 2011: 148). In the following excerpt, Amy described the assumptions that she faced based on her status as a mother:

> When I first got promoted, the senior sergeant comes to me and he was a jerk, and he said to me, "You better never call in sick because you don't have childcare." And I said, "You can't say stuff like that to me." He didn't know, he's dumb, but I'm like, "First of all, I've never called in sick because of childcare. I've called in sick because my kids are sick. I can't take them to daycare when they're throwing up." He wasn't happy that I got promoted as the first female sergeant in the department.

Catherine, 64, an officer in Louisiana, observed discrimination experienced by a colleague:

> There was a gal that I had worked with closely, she put in for a job and they asked if she had just gotten married and if she was gonna get pregnant. She put in for detectives and they asked her that and she was pretty mad. And then she got passed over twice for these special assignments, even though she had [the necessary experience]; nobody could give her a reason why she was passed over.

Although discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy is unlawful, Gregory (2003) found that organizations become more subtle in their discrimination instead of adjusting their practices.

Male officers' bias against mothers also encompasses less severe but more pervasive cultural assumptions and stereotypes. Stephanie described a common

stereotype: “If somebody has to go home because there's an issue at home, there's still that thing where if a guy calls in sick because his kids were sick, everybody's like, ‘Where's your wife?’” Schulze (2011) found that even male officers who are parents engage in gender stereotyping related to parenthood and paid work. Similarly, Amy recounted an experience in which her right to work in policing was challenged:

> I remember one time, and this was long time ago, [other officers] were getting into conversation about politics. And we had a guy there in the unit that was Mormon and another guy, super Christian, and then there was me. And the Mormon guy said to me, “you're just taking a man's job who needs to feed his family. You really shouldn't be here.”

Organizations, especially those dominated by men, assume that the ideal worker has no social or familial obligations outside of work or that these needs are fulfilled by women in the private sphere of the home (Acker 1990). Therefore, single mothers are in the doubly challenging position of carrying the full weight of their work life and home life.

“Women’s Work” and Gender-Based Job Role Segregation

<u>“Women’s Work”</u>

A prevalent experience among female police officers is pressure to fill “women’s work” positions in policing (Garcia 2003; Rabe-Hemp 2018). These roles tend to include working with children, victims (especially victims of sex crimes), schools, and community centers and that primarily concern public relations or paperwork. The rise in the popularity of community policing has led to the creation of more of these caring roles, while simultaneously allowing white men to avoid them by fulfilling more militaristic roles (Miller 1999; Rabe-Hemp 2018). Fifteen participants (75% of the sample) described

working in a sex-stereotyped job assignment at least once. Kim, 61, an officer in Louisiana, described her experiences as follows:

> It was sexist. They gave me all the sexual assault cases 'cause I was the female. I was a school outreach officer. In that position in schools, I started these community programs for the kids. They liked them and attendance was good, but I found out after I'd transitioned off that the male officer who had [the assignment] after me didn't continue them. I don't think he cared. […] Oh! And I always had to do the death notifications for the families.

Both Kim and her life partner, who is also a female officer, have worked as school outreach officers at some point in their careers. A commonality of many "women's work" roles in policing is the requirement for higher-than-average emotional labor. Emotional labor is common to many service-oriented or public facing roles filled by women and is based in gendered expectations of women as caring, friendly, and deferential (Hochschild 1983).

Female officers are aware of the stigma associated with fulfilling "women's work" roles and how it negatively impacts future promotions. Therefore, they use several methods to avoid these roles. Julia, 55, an officer in California, relayed the following tactics:

> I was really lucky and I had the right people being my mentors and my champions. But I also, you know, I studied. I paid attention. I was very strategic about my career and where I was going to go and what I wanted to do, and so I always was a step ahead I felt because I would pay for own training if I need to.

For Julia, paying for her own training was possible because she had no dependents; she described this choice as "smart" and an "investment in myself." Tina, 59, an officer in Louisiana, used a different tactic: "I avoided those women's assignments. I wanted to work K-9 and special response. And I did, but I also had to do the women's units because

none of the males would." When asked how she managed to avoid "women's work" assignments, Tina said, "I would offer to do the evidence and the paper work for [my coworkers]. It wasn't right, but it worked." Although Tina engaged in avoidance strategies, she was not always successful in her attempts to avoid sex-stereotyped job assignments. Heather, 46, an officer in Louisiana, observed, "every female I know in law enforcement has worked the shit jobs." Rabe-Hemp (2018: 127) argued,

> It should not be surprising that a woman who joined one of the most masculine professions available did so not because of her desire to display overtly feminine caretaking behaviors but because she was drawn to policing for other reasons – like because of the strength and authority inherent in police work.

"Women's work" assignments in policing are both lower in prestige and among the most frequent and severe stressors for police officers (Violanti et al 2016). Therefore, it is unsurprising that many female police officers take great pains to avoid them.

Being the Only Woman in the Room

Every participant reported numerous experiences of being the only woman in a room or on a team. These experiences were more common among those with a tenure in policing of over 20 years. In some cases, participants were the first women hired by their agency. Tina, 59, an officer in Louisiana, described being unfazed: "Look, I was the only woman in the sheriff's department. Then [when I moved agencies] I was the only female detective. So I'm used to it." When Kim, 61, an officer in California, began her career in policing 32 years ago, she was often the lone woman: "I had no choice of departments, I applied to all of them but only got any interest from one! Then when I got hired, I was the first female in the department's history." After being hired, she experienced a similar pattern in the police academy: "I was [at the academy] for three months. And it was 40–

50 males and me and three other women. That was it. The academy instructor said at our graduation 'I didn't think you women would make it.'" Part of why isolation occurs is the low proportion of women in police agencies, especially after ascending more than one rank step (Martin and Jurik 2007).

The type of team or role that a female officer works in also impacts her likelihood of working with other women; "women's work" assignments tend to be filled by female officers (Garcia 2003; Rabe-Hemp 2018). When female officers do obtain competitive and traditionally masculine roles, they often report being the only woman. For example, when Amy, 53, an officer in California, was asked how often she was the lone woman, she responded:

> 80% of the time. We did have this one team on night shift where there was three women just because we'd all gotten hired around the same time, and we all ended up on the same team, but when I was a detective, I was the only woman.

Detective roles are usually competitive and prestigious and therefore less likely to be filled by women. Julia, 55, an officer in California, recalled,

> I can't even count how many times I was the only one or one of few women. I remember going to a SWAT commander's meeting, and it was probably in 2010, maybe 2009. So, pretty recently, and there were probably 300 guys and maybe four women.

Julia's experience highlights the rarity of women leaders in symbolically masculine teams such as SWAT. In fact, female police officers in leadership roles are generally rare, regardless of whether they lead "women's work" teams or more masculine-coded teams. Lonsway et al. (2002) found that women comprise 7.3% and 3.7% of top leadership positions in large agencies and smaller agencies, respectively. Among smaller and rural

agencies (which were more common in the Louisiana sample), 97.4% only have male supervisors and administrators (Lonsway et al 2002).

Denied Promotions and Pushed Out

Participants also outlined experiences of being denied promotion and work at other agencies. Six female officers in the sample described encountering what Schulz (2004) termed the “brass ceiling,” the sex-based discrimination that leads to the underrepresentation of women in leadership and administrative ranks. Becky, 48, an officer in California, was blackballed by a particular police agency without explanation: “I've applied with them twice. The first time, the crazy second boss that I had at [Agency A] basically blocked me. He went to the colonel of state police because they were buddies and squashed my application. I found out years later.” Kanter (1977) argued that “homosocial reproduction” is one mechanism through which leadership remains homogenous. She suggested that those in power (i.e., white, middle- to upper-class, heterosexual men) identify others like themselves as the best candidates for promotion or hiring. This perpetuates a cycle in which women and people of color are excluded from leadership roles. Similarly, male officers socially exclude their female colleagues, thus limiting informal mentorship and networking opportunities to the in-group (Martin 1980; Weisheit 1987). The “old boys’ club” also affected a friend of Tina’s, 59, an officer in Louisiana: “She made chief, which was huge, but then maybe a year, two years later, they forced her out because one of the good ol’ boys wanted her job. I’m not sure what reason

they gave, but she was out." When asked what she meant by "pushed out," Tina said that the male subordinates "set her up" and "made her look bad."

While many agencies have strict rules and regulations around promotion based on seniority, promotions become more "political" after the second rank increase, according to participants. Mary, 48, an officer in California, described her progression as follows: "It's like I got to a certain level and then just stalled." When asked what contributed to this situation, she blamed the "good old boys' network." Similarly, while it may be clear how to attain the rank of sergeant, the assignment that one receives at this rank is up to the discretion of leadership. Gwen, 61, an officer in California, outlined the problems with this system:

> [My progression] got blocked…Based on an agreement [that the agency] had with the union the leadership didn't have to give a reason for their non-selection. One time I got passed over for this promotion and I found out later they gave it to this white guy who, turned out, was on a performance [improvement] plan. I was only able to get promoted once a new sheriff was elected. But then, when they said, "we want a woman on this team," I tried to get on, but when I asked they never gave me the times for the trainings and the meetings. Then they said "oh, no women wanted it."

Women officers who attempt to join traditionally masculine teams in police agencies have been told that there were no job openings or that they lacked the necessary experience, especially those who had previously performed "women's work" (Rabe-Hemp 2018). Another trend is that, of the six participants who described blocked progression in their careers, four worked in sheriff's departments. This may be due to the minimal accountability structure in sheriff's departments, where little oversight occurs of the sheriff, except insofar as controversies may lead to failed re-elections. Sheriffs'

departments also tend to be in suburban or rural locations and employ fewer full-time sworn offices than municipal police departments (Brooks 2016).

Gender- and Race-Based Stereotypes and Job Role Segregation

For women of color, the intersection of gender- and race-based bias and discrimination leads to unique stereotypes and forms of job segregation. Of the six participants who identified as women of color, all described unequal treatment; however, only three attributed this to being both a woman and a person of color. For Stephanie, 41, an officer in Louisiana, her race did not affect her work as much as her gender: “When they look at me, they see female, not Hispanic.” Stephanie described herself as “not obviously Hispanic” or white-passing. Stephanie also believed that the lack of other Latinx people contributed to her experiences, with African Americans being the largest population of color in the state. While Latinx people account for 39% of the population in California, they account for only 5% of the state population in Louisiana (Pew Research Center 2014). Conversely, for Kim, 61, an officer in California, her Asian American identity led to compounding forms of stereotyping. She recounted, “I teach the driving portion of the academy. I’m a really good driver. I had to joke about it, because as an Asian woman there are two stereotypes against me.” Kim used humor to both diffuse tension and take power away from colleagues who make jokes by making the joke first. Studies have found that female officers use humor to deflect attention related to experiences of sexism (Cockburn 1991; Jurik 1988).

Kim and Mary, a 48-year-old Latina participant, were routinely asked to work with civilians who looked like them. Kim recalled, “They would ask me to translate for Asians. Asians of all nationalities!” Mary, an officer in California, reported similar experiences: “Anytime they were on patrol with me they’d call me to translate. Here’s the problem: [the citizens] weren’t actually Spanish. Like I’ve gotten Arabic, Portuguese…” Mary later noted that, although some of the male officers on her shift were Latino, she was the only officer who was asked to translate. Becky, 48, an officer in Louisiana, described the experience of her Black coworker and friend, Reggie:

> There was just two African American males. And they were always the ones, “Okay, I need to go to the Black nightclub, we're going to the Black part of town,” you know, there was like, they would have to go to Black strip clubs. So I mean, they got sent all over just because we didn't have any Black officers.

The experiences of Kim, Mary, and Reggie (as told by Becky) align with past research. Black and Latinx workers, like women workers, are strategically excluded from traditionally white and male jobs (Tomaskovic-Devey 1993). When Black employees are hired, they often fulfill roles that directly involve interactions with other Black people, such as clients or members of the community (Collins 1993). Palmiotto et al. (2006) found that the same pattern was true of Black officers in police agencies.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the cultural factors that affect female police officers and their work. Women who work in police agencies encounter stereotypes and biases (Jurik 1988; Kanter 1977; Martin 1980) and gender and sexual harassment, which often manifests as verbal harassment (Hunt 1990; Jacobs 1987; Martin 1980; Remmington

1983) and pressure to perform "women's work" (Miller 1999; Morash and Haarr 2012; Palmiotto et al 2006), and problems associated with their conflicting roles as mothers and officers (Langan et al 2017; Martin 1991; Schulze 2011; Rabe-Hemp 2018). While previous literature has identified major barriers that prevent women's full acceptance in police work, this chapter offered three new contributions: an officer's status as a mother impacts her approach to her work, participants who worked in sheriff's departments were more likely to have their professional advancement blocked due to a lack of accountability, and women officers of color are asked to engage in the uniquely gendered and racialized activity of acting as informal translators. It is also worth noting that location did not appear to play a role in the likelihood of experiencing these barriers or the severity of these barriers. In addition, this chapter also substantiated previous findings from police and gender scholars with data from novel geographical regions and more recent data.

First, while the extant literature has documented the ways in which police work impacts a female officer's approach to motherhood, few studies have examined the reverse. It has been well-documented that female police officers who are mothers perform most of the unpaid domestic labor in their families, are acutely aware of the possible dangers that their children may encounter, and have difficulty balancing parenthood and police work due to unpredictable shift schedules and overtime demands (Agocs et al 2015). This chapter reinforced the struggles of officers who are mothers (especially single mothers) in securing childcare that aligns with their unusual schedules. Participants also described motherhood as a primary reason to seek promotion for both

financial and safety reasons. They also described the ways in which cases involving children at work were sometimes experienced as more emotionally complex after they became parents. Most participants found that such cases affected them more than they did in the past; however, one participant argued that she could effectively compartmentalize her work and home life. This finding warrants further attention in future research to identify the complex relationship between motherhood and the funneling of female officers into roles that involve victims of crimes and children, which may be more traumatizing for them than for officers without children.

The second trend was the higher prevalence of blocked progression or promotion among participants who worked in sheriffs' departments compared to those who worked in municipal police departments. Sheriffs' departments operate at the county level and are distinct from municipal, state, and federal police agencies. Although they tend to be smaller than municipal police agencies, sheriff's departments still employ 25% of sworn police officers in the United States (Brooks 2019). Sheriffs are elected; only one person serves as sheriff and has ultimate decision-making power, and departments operate independently of other parts of the government. This setup creates opportunities for the abuse of power due to lack of accountability. This could be partly solved by expanding the accountability structure of sheriff's departments through a civilian-led review board with subpoena power. Currently, approximately 22% of sheriff's departments with 500 or more sworn officers feature such a board, but smaller departments are less likely to use a review board—4.7% for sheriff's departments with 100 to 499 sworn officers (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2020).

This chapter's third contribution is to highlight the ways in which intersectional oppression leads female officers of color to perform both racialized and gendered work assignments. In this sample, the most common experience was being asked to translate for community members, which only happened to women of color. Past research has identified the ways in which officers of color are forced to take assignments that involve interacting with members of their own racial group (Collins 1993; Palmiotto et al 2006). In addition, women are often asked to fill roles that require greater emotional labor (Miller 1999; Rabe-Hemp 2018). This particular issue was only observed in the Californian sample due to a lack of racial diversity in the Louisianan sample and the state's demographics (i.e., relatively few Latinx residents).

Finally, contrary to expectations, location was not a salient factor in female officers' experiences of cultural forms of workplace gender inequality. This may be due to the hegemonic nature of police culture. While many scholars are critical of the idea that police culture is a monolith (Silvestri 2017), a common factor in all instances was police culture's roots in patriarchal structures of power (Corsianos 2009). This finding also bolsters Acker's (1990) assertion that all organizations have a gendered hierarchy that is maintained at the structural and cultural levels. Future research should explore the limits of this finding by expanding the analysis of women officers' experiences of cultural forms of gender inequality to include other states and other countries.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESPONDING TO AND COPING WITH GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Introduction

As shown in the previous chapters, many female police officers experience stereotyping, discrimination, and workplace gender harassment and sexual harassment (Martin and Jurik 2007; Morash and Haarr 2012; Prokos and Padavic 2003; Rabe-Hemp 2018; Remmington 1983). In this chapter, I apply Acker's (1990) concept of gendered institutions to examine the experiences of interpersonal bias and harassment reported by participants. I also analyze gender inequality in criminal justice workplaces through the lens of Britton's (2011) application of agency. By highlighting individual officers' agency, this chapter explores the ways in which they responded to experiences of stereotyping, harassment, and discrimination at the workplace and how these choices are constrained by the culture and structure of police agencies.

While workplace gender inequality has been well-documented in policing, fewer studies have examined the ways in which female police officers display agency through their actions. This chapter also extends past work by considering how these experiences vary by location. I find that participants reacted to discrimination in three ways: informal actions, moving agencies, and filing official complaints or lawsuits. Female officers in Louisiana were most likely to pursue informal actions, while officers in California were most likely to file official complaints. Women in both locations chose to move agencies.

Defining Workplace Sexual Harassment, Gender Harassment, and Discrimination

Acker (1990) used the term “gendered organizations” not only to refer to the ways in which social institutions are sites where gender is enacted but also to show that gender inequality pervades all levels of these institutions. Britton (2011) applied this framework to women who work in criminal justice occupations to highlight the ways in which gender inequality permeates all levels of police agencies, the court system, and correctional facilities. Britton (2011:120) used the term “agency” to label the final level of analysis within a gendered organization. She argued, “Interactions between workers on the job […] may act to reinforce inequalities by race, class, and gender.” According to this definition of agency, workers engage in behaviours that may conform to or resist gender norms. While police work in the United States has historically been a reliable occupation for working-class white men (Britton 2011), the masculine culture of policing reinforces the real and symbolic exclusion of women from the profession. As a result, Remmington (1983) found that male police officers react with aggression and hostility when women enter the field and challenge the masculine status quo. Others have traced the roots of male dominance to the implicit and explicit lessons taught during police academy training, whereby academy instructors publicly undermine female trainees and make sexist jokes to reinforce the masculine ideal (Prokos and Padavic 2003).

Workplace sexual harassment is recognized as a form of sex discrimination and is prohibited under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Use of the term “sexual harassment” began in 1976 to describe one form of sex discrimination (MacKinnon 1978). The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) released

guidelines to define sexual harassment in the workplace in 1980. The EEOC described sexual harassment as follows:

> Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

The courts have addressed two types of sexual harassment at work: *quid pro quo* and hostile work environments. The first, *quid pro quo*, describes situations in which a sexual proposition is made and the victim must comply or face adverse employment decisions or denial of employment benefits (Gregory 2003). The second type, *hostile work environments*, has a larger scope. A hostile work environment occurs when the employing agency fosters or allows an environment in which a victim faces routine and severe sexual intimidation, innuendo, or other forms of harassing conduct (Gregory 2003). In 1991, the courts developed the "reasonable woman" standard to determine whether the harassing behavior was severe and pervasive enough to constitute an abusive work environment (*Ellison v. Brady* 1991). This restricted what could be considered under a hostile work environment claim.

By contrast, gender harassment refers to behaviors that aim to denigrate, humiliate, or exclude women but are not explicitly sexual in nature (Leskinen et al 2011). Gender harassment includes the following:

> Sexually crude terminology or displays (for instance, calling a colleague a "cunt" or telling a sexually graphic joke about her), but these behaviors differ from unwanted sexual attention in that they aim to insult and reject women, not pull them into a sexual relationship. (Leskinen et al 2011: 26)

The legal definition of a hostile work environment can include both sexual harassment and gender harassment. Few studies have examined the prevalence and impact of gender harassment, but some research has suggested that gender harassment is viewed as less severe and important than sexual harassment; therefore, victims are less likely to report their experiences (Langhout et al 2005). Gender harassment is motivated by hostility toward people who violate accepted gender norms and expectations (Berdahl 2007), such as women in male-dominated occupations. Similarly, scholars have suggested that workplace gender discrimination is impacted by the gender composition of the workplace and gender norms surrounding the work itself, which leaves women in occupations traditionally dominated by women especially vulnerable to harassment and discrimination (Burstein 1989; Ridgeway and Correll 2004). Furthermore, Bobbitt-Zeher (2011) asserted that "the use of discrimination when a particular woman violates gender assumptions… occurs exclusively in sex-segregated workplaces" (p.781).

Gutek et al. (1990) outlined the "contact hypothesis," in which the prevalence and severity of sexual harassment are correlated with the amount of contact that individuals have with coworkers of another gender. This hypothesis was also verified in a larger sample of women: "*what* a woman does for a living is less important than *where* she does her job" (Gruber 1998:314). Furthermore, this study found that women who work in male-dominated workplaces were more likely to be touched or threatened by colleagues and encounter sexual materials such as pornography or pinup-style calendars (Gruber 1998). This is especially true of women who work in male-dominated, blue-collar occupations; they face greater harassment than their counterparts in male-dominated,

white-collar occupations, which is likely due to the latter's greater focus on traditional ideals of professionalism (Gutek 1985; McCabe and Hardman 2005).

In her study of women in the male-dominated building trades, Denissen (2010) identified both formal and informal responses to unwanted sexual conduct at work, including emotion management, modifying one's appearance or behaviour, situational withdrawal, and quitting. Tradeswomen must face a workplace culture that pressures them to respond in informal ways: "Cultural, workplace, and interactional norms make the costs of interpreting unwanted sexual conduct as sexual harassment quite high and, therefore limit tradeswomen's options for responding to actions that cross the line" (Denissen 2010: 322). Beyond the building trades, women may also choose not to report due to cynicism about the organization's response to harassment reports (McDonald 2012). Hart (2019) found that women who do report workplace sexual harassment face significant penalties in the likelihood of promotion and that both women and men were equally likely to penalize a female employee for reporting sexual harassment. Victims who report sexual harassment have also experienced retaliation in the form of demotions or terminations (Hesson-McInnis and Fitzgerald 1997).

Past research has demonstrated that women in police agencies react to discrimination and harassment by leaving police work, filing official complaints or lawsuits, or transferring agencies (Martin 1990; Rabe-Hemp 2018). Data shows that female police officers have higher turnover rates than their male counterparts in both municipal and state police agencies, which is likely in part a reaction to negative experiences (Martin 1990). Haarr (2005) found that gender discrimination is a main

reason why female officers resign in the first two years of their employment. Among the female officers who remain, many choose to handle experiences of sexual harassment or bullying in an informal manner by talking to a friend and forming bonds with other women or members of their racial group at work (Martin and Jurik 2007). This reluctance to pursue formal channels among female police officers is based on an implicit understanding that filing an official complaint or a lawsuit could result in retaliation from colleagues (Martin and Jurik 2007). Despite such concerns, there is evidence that an increasing number of women are filing suits and winning settlements (Collins and Vaughn 2004). However, it is impossible to precisely determine the prevalence of such legal settlements, as many require confidentiality from plaintiffs in exchange for restitution or compensation (Baum 2019; Prasad, 2018). Scholars have argued that, by mandating confidentiality in sexual harassment and discrimination settlements, agencies contribute to the prevalence of workplace sexual harassment (Baum 2019; Prasad 2018). By requiring victims of sexual harassment and discrimination to remain silent about their experiences, agencies conceal the frequency and severity of these experiences and obscure patterns of behavior.

Prevalence of Workplace Sexual Harassment, Gender Harassment, and Discrimination

In the literature, questions about the prevalence of workplace harassment and discrimination remain. Among working women (not only those in law enforcement), research suggests that only 5–30% of women who experience workplace sexual

harassment file official complaints with their employer and 1% or less pursue legal action (McDonald 2012). In policing, women officers have described sexual harassment by male colleagues toward both members of the public and women officers as "very prevalent" (Maher 2010:270). One study concluded that, although women officers believed that discrimination had decreased over time, more than 60% still reported experiencing more subtle forms of workplace harassment (Gossett and Williams 1998). These include gendered work assignments, men-only mentorship networks, and male subordinates directly seeking assistance from a female manager's male boss (Gossett and Williams 1998). Another study found that 88% of women officers described experiences of sexual harassment, of whom 25% experienced *quid pro quo* harassment specifically (Martin 1990). These estimates suggest that, on average, female police officers experience higher rates of workplace sexual harassment than other women in the workplace: 60–88% of female officers versus 40–75% of all women in the United States (Aggarwal and Gupta 2000).

In an international study that surveyed women police officers from Africa, Europe, Australia, and North America, more participants from the United States reported experiencing sexual harassment than those from any other region (Brown and Heidensohn 1996). This may result from the lack of prescribed sanctions in American harassment law (Gossett and Williams 1998). Scholars have argued that a "major weakness of both legislation and policy changes was a failure to provide adequate legal sanctions when the male-dominated police departments failed to follow affirmative action guidelines until or unless threatened by a lawsuit" (Gossett and Williams 1998:56).

Sexual harassment reinforces existing gender and racial inequalities in an organization and is present at all levels of the workplace hierarchy (MacKinnon 1978). For lesbian officers and women officers of color, their intersecting status as an "outsider" may amplify sexual and gender harassment and complicate the available ways to respond to it. Therefore, it is crucial to apply an intersectional framework to discussions of gender inequality, as it overlaps with racial inequality and inequality based on sexual identity.

Female officers of color face workplace sexual harassment, gender harassment, and discrimination because they are women in a male-dominated occupation and people of color in a largely white profession (Texeira 2002). Moreover, women of color are less likely to file sexual harassment claims than white women. When women of color are sexually harassed, they are caught between the fear that they will not be believed if the harasser is white and the risk of being labelled disloyal if the harasser is a member of their own race (Martin 1991). This is further complicated by divisions between women due to race, as some women of color have reported developing closer bonds with men in the same racial group than with white women, whom they feel are as racist as their white male counterparts (Owen 1988).

Sexual identity is also salient to women's experiences of sexual harassment. In some cases, lesbian officers are more accepted by their male colleagues than heterosexual women due to their assumed masculinity (Burke 1994; Miller, Forest, and Jurik 2003). However, lesbian women struggle to connect with other women with similar experiences of harassment, as straight women may distance themselves from lesbians in the workplace (Miller, Forest, and Jurik 2003).

Responses to Workplace Sexual Harassment, Gender Harassment, and Discrimination

To supplement the interview data, I also analyzed several public case records workplace sexual harassment or discrimination in police agencies to better understand the constraints under which women make choices about how to respond to these situations, if at all. Overall, there is limited publicly available data about rates of reported sexual harassment or discrimination in police agencies since most agencies use an internal disciplinary commission or panel and proceedings are confidential. Complaints to external bodies, such as the EEOC, also remain confidential even after they have been decided. The cases included in this chapter were publicly available only because one of the parties in the case appealed the internal panel's decision. Furthermore, when female officers pursue legal action outside of these internal committees, so-called "secret settlements" have become the norm. These practices severely limit research that aims to detect patterns of workplace sexual harassment and discrimination through an analysis of historical case records and their outcomes.

Three major themes emerged from women officers' responses to experiences of gender inequality at work. When faced with harassment and discrimination, they responded informally, moved agencies, or filed official complaints and/or lawsuits. Due to the inclusion criteria for the research (i.e., participants must actively work in law enforcement or have retired within five years of the study) and the use of gatekeepers in recruitment, this study does not capture the experiences of women who chose to leave police work altogether before retirement. The gatekeepers helped the researcher

overcome initial concerns over entry and trust building, but the sample likely reflects their friends and colleagues, which tends to lead to greater homogeneity among participants (Weiss 1994). However, studies have shown that exiting police work in response to experiences of gender inequality is a common phenomenon (Rabe-Hemp 2018) that may also operate for women outside of this sample in these two regions.

Response One: Informal Actions

The first response to harassment and discrimination reported by participants was to take informal, interpersonal actions or internally reframe their experiences. Participants said that their decision to avoid making an official complaint or file a lawsuit primarily stemmed from a fear of retaliation or the belief that their experiences were not severe enough to warrant formal action. On a related note, women who chose to take informal actions also described using humor to diffuse and deflect unwanted comments or behaviors from colleagues. Some participants who chose not to pursue formal channels relied on informal networks support for women. This response was most common among participants who worked in Louisiana. Eight participants from Louisiana reported taking informal actions, compared to three participants from California. The culture in Louisiana, which discourages the reporting of sexual harassment, may be related to the state's more politically and socially conservative climate. Participants said that they felt unable to come forward due to institutional pressure, the prevailing culture, or the belief that they could handle the issue themselves.

Use of Humor

In some cases, informal responses took the form of stoicism—or, as one respondent framed it, “not letting them get a rise outta you.” In others, participants used humor to diffuse tense situations. The use of humor in this manner has been well-documented (Cockburn 1991; Jurik 1988). Some participants who viewed some forms of harassment and discrimination as an interpersonal issue used humor to defend themselves or diffuse the situation. Julia, 55, an officer in California, described an experience from earlier in her career:

> There would be a couple of guys that would, you know, we would go out for cocktails after our shift and they’d get handsy, and I’d be like “Now stop it. You’re barking up the wrong tree.” It was a funny, common tactic. You know “I’m not into you. Get your hands off me.” There was a mentality that because I was gay I was a challenge. And once people realized I really was gay and I wasn’t going to you know, flirt with them or do anything more than be their partner at work it stopped. Eventually it stopped.

Julia described this experience as “nothing significant” and chose to use humor to diffuse the situation at the time. Her experience was based on both her gender and her identity as a lesbian woman. Similarly, Kim, 61, an officer in California, began the trainings that she led at the police academy with a joke:

> You know I’m a female and Asian, so I have two stereotypes against my driving. But you know what, I’m the best driver and I teach the driving portion in the academy. I start every class with a joke about being an unlikely choice for instructor.

Kim described her upfront use of humor as a way to bond with her students and take ownership of other people’s perceptions of her and to be in on the joke. In a study involving female correctional officers, 90% of participants described using humor as a means to “build camaraderie with coworkers, thwart unwelcome advances, and handle

sexist remarks" (Jurik 1988: 300). While the use of humor may be effective on an interpersonal level, it cannot overcome structural impediments to success.

Viewing Experiences as Not Worthy of Escalation

Many women first entered full police roles in the 1970s. At the time, workplace sexual harassment, gender harassment, and gender-based discrimination were less openly discussed than they are today. Many employees in police agencies and other workplaces first became familiar with the concept of sexual harassment after Anita Hill's 1991 testimony during the Supreme Court confirmation hearings for Clarence Thomas (Rabe-Hemp 2018). Catherine, 64, an officer in Louisiana, elaborated, "When I first joined [in the 1970s] nobody explained what [harassment] was or what to do about it. That only changed a few years back when supervisors were mandated reporters, then we all had to go to these sexual harassment seminars." This response was shared by other participants with long tenures, who said that they did not remember being told what sexual harassment or discrimination were during their training or how to report it. Similarly, understandings of sexual harassment vary by regional culture and the hiring institution's internal policies (Marshall 2005). When sexual harassment is narrowly defined, workers are less likely to frame their experiences as harassment.

Other participants viewed differential treatment, sexual jokes, or propositions from male colleagues as interpersonal issues that did not rise to the level of reportable offenses. Some participants recounted experiences that could be considered harassment but argued that their experiences were not "bad enough" to be reported. Heather, 46, an officer in Louisiana, described her mindset: "You're always have some guy whose gonna

be an asshole because you're a female. I get by keeping my head down and telling myself 'it's not about you.'" Heather explained that harassment and discrimination are "part of the job" and therefore something to be endured. To file a complaint, she argued that the situation would have to "really, really bad." Similarly, Stephanie, 41, an officer and a veteran in Louisiana, reported, "After being in the military, the stuff I get at work now is nothing." Like Heather, she said that the situation had to be severe for her to consider pursuing formal action. These reactions echo Denissen's (2010) study of women in the building trades, in which participants attempted to exhaust all possible informal responses before considering formal responses, including emotion management strategies such as actively ignoring the offending behavior or "getting used to it" (p.310), similar to Heather's statement about "keeping [her] head down."

Researchers have found that women who work in male-dominated occupations are more likely to downplay experiences that could be considered workplace sexual harassment (MacDonald 2012). This can be explained by work cultures in which the sexualization of women is encouraged (Prokos and Padavic 2007; Williams 1997) and by female employees' own reframing to be seen as team players and "honorary men" by coworkers (Collinson and Collinson 1996:37). Some female officers' desire to engage in traditionally masculine social behaviors in police work exemplifies Smith's (1987) theory of "bifurcated consciousness," in which women are required to simultaneously consider their own views and experiences and those of men. Smith's work borrows from DuBois' (1903) "double consciousness," in which African Americans are able to see both their own perspective and the perspectives of white people. Both theories describe an

oppressed group's ability to see themselves through the eyes of the dominant group. In police work, this manifests in female officers recognizing and engaging in the dominant group's preferred masculine behaviors to fit in.

Some participants chose to engage with informal support networks with other women to share experiences of harassment or discrimination and inform newcomers of people or situations to avoid. Tammy, 64, an officer from Louisiana, said, "after a while you get to know who the creepy ones are, and we girls would tell each other who to steer clear from." Tammy described talks between women officers in the women's locker room as a key way for women to offer each other tips and commiserate together. Kim, 61, an officer from California, was the first female officer hired by her department. Once the agency started to hire more women, she would "have a motherly talk with each new woman. Offer support. Tell them who in the department was safe and who was trouble." Kim argued that because she was the first and longest-tenured woman officer, it was her duty to share what she knew with newer recruits. Laura, 56, an officer in California, similarly advised new women recruits to "get to know your allies in the department." As a protective measure, women often rely on informal support networks to share information about harassment and discrimination and to warn each other about offending coworkers.

Past research on mentoring among women police officers has been mixed. Some studies found that some female officers rejected other women and instead attempted to become "one of the guys" due to a desire not to be associated with negative stereotypes about women (Martin, 1980; Miller et al 2003; Remmington 1983). However, other

studies found that women supported each other and viewed mentoring as being important to workplace gender equity (Morash and Haarr 2012). While participants described this relationship as beneficial, this strategy, much like the use of humor, does not lead to structural or cultural changes in agencies. Morash and Haarr (2007) argued that one source of gender inequality in police agencies is the absence of high-ranking male mentors who are willing to help female officers. Although many participants were unlikely to take official action in response to workplace harassment and discrimination, they relied on protective strategies such as the use of humor to diffuse tense situations and informal support networks with other women.

Fear of Retaliation

When participants discussed their reactions to experiences of workplace harassment and discrimination, almost all of them emphasized that lodging a formal complaint was not a viable option. Instead, they described a climate in which it was not permissible to report discrimination or harassment. As Tina, 59, an officer in Louisiana, said, "30 years ago you didn't file reports." She also worried that speaking out about unfair treatment would reflect poorly on other women officers. This was a common sentiment among participants. Stephanie, 41, an officer in Louisiana, tried to "keep her head down." She said, "I was the only woman in the sheriff's department. I thought if I made a complaint it would keep them from hiring any more women." Similarly, Kim, 61, an officer in California, recalled facing heightened scrutiny as the first woman hired as an officer in her department. Her supervisor later told her, "I was watching you, if you were good I would hire more women." As minorities in police agencies, women officers often

report heightened visibility and scrutiny, a dynamic that participants were keenly aware of. This exemplifies the pressure felt by tokens in the workplace (Kanter 1977). As the lone female officer in her agency, Kim felt hyper-visible and therefore subject to higher scrutiny. These findings are in line the pressures felt by participants in Martin's (1988) seminal work. Women officers face a double bind because being a woman and being competent are seen as mutually exclusive; any action that they take would be labeled as either weakness and ineptitude or "bitchiness" and coldness.

Women who experience harassment are caught in what Jamieson (1995) termed the "silence/shame" double bind. If a woman complains, she would be shamed, but if she remains silent, her mistreatment would be ignored. Conversely, Sugden (2005) argued that, when a woman reacts by ignoring or not acting on sexual harassment, it is helpful to her but detrimental to the workplace overall. When women ignore sexual harassment, this may be interpreted as consent, which upholds the belief that harassing behavior is normal or not noteworthy and leads to its persistence. While women cannot be asked to always act in the best interest of the collective, it is worth noting that informal strategies do not address or clarify root problems in police agencies.

Response Two: Moving Agencies

The second response exhibited by participants was to move agencies. Eleven women officers (55% of the sample) either currently work for or retired from a different agency than the one they began their policing career in. Participants chose to move agencies in response to both harassment and discrimination and as a proactive measure to

achieve promotion or better pay. Moving agencies was a tactic shared by both California- (*n* = 6) and Louisiana-based (*n* = 5) officers. This response relies on either a density of police agencies in a small geographical area or an officer's ability to move for work. In many cases, officers who work in populous states and areas have more agencies to choose from than those in smaller, more rural states. However, Louisiana is unique in this regard, as it has the highest ratio of police officers to residents in the United States (405 per 100,000 residents). California has 509 police agencies, while Louisiana has 348 (Reaves 2011). California and Louisiana also share similar rates of unemployment: in 2019, California had an unemployment rate of 4.2% and ranked 42nd in the nation, while Louisiana had an unemployment rate of 4.7% and ranked 45th (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2020). This means that, compared to the average officer, participants in both states were better able to work at another agency without having to move. Moving to an agency in a new city would also be easier for single women, as they would not have to worry about also finding work for a partner.

In some cases, the inability to obtain promotions or desired placements within the department led some respondents to move agencies; in others, women chose to move for better pay and rank promotions. Finding accurate data about officers who moved to other police agencies is challenging, as some studies count women who leave their agency for any reason toward attrition rates and do not separate those who leave for other employment (Martin and Jurik 2007). This is further exacerbated by the lack of a federal registration system, which could be used to monitor individual officers regardless of agency. The first study to capture the trend of women leaving one police agency for

another in search of better pay and benefits found that women comprised 15.5% of all officers who had moved agencies from 1971 to 1980 (Fry 1983).

Some participants described moving agencies in response to implicit or explicit indications that they would not be promoted or given a desired assignment at their current agency. Tammy, 64, an officer from Louisiana, relayed such an experience: “I was flat out told that I reached the highest point I could as a woman. I moved to [different agency] and made captain. And got better pay.” Tammy described this as a prudent choice because she would not face retaliation from agency leadership and achieved her desired outcome. Similarly, Susan, 52, an officer from Louisiana, described the experience that led her to move agencies: “Now, I was nominated for Officer of the Year, but the guy in charge of deciding it says to me ‘no woman’s going to win that!’ That was when I decided [to move agencies].” Susan said that this was not the first time that she had experienced workplace discrimination, but she called it “the straw that broke the camel’s back.” Following this incident, she applied to a larger municipal agency. Thus, both Tammy and Susan experienced explicit discrimination and chose to move agencies in response.

The use of consent decrees to encourage police agencies to hire more women and people of color has created a “revolving door” in which women are hired and trained but then quickly leave policing thereafter (Jacobs 1989). The use of consent decrees also varies by presidential administration. For example, during Barack Obama’s presidency, 15 new consent decrees were entered into, compared to three during the George W. Bush administration and none during presidency of Donald Trump (Faturechi 2020; Lucas

2020). This suggests that enforcing police accountability is a partisan issue, which supports the unequal experiences of women officers in Democratic and Republican states. When consent decrees are used, agencies are incentivized to hire women but do little to change the organizational structure and culture that initially fostered a male-dominated workplace. While both men and women leave police work, significantly more women than men do so (Fry 1983; Martin 1990; Seagram and Stark-Adamec 1992). In particular, women are more likely to leave a police agency due to poor parental or childcare policies and the challenges of being a woman in a male-dominated occupation (Haarr 2005; Polowek 1996). Participants in this study did not leave their agency due to poor parental policies, although many mentioned their dissatisfaction with them.

Some women chose to move agencies, citing the same fears of retaliation described by participants who pursued informal actions. Amy, 53, an officer from California, described her decision to move agencies:

> I was working at [Agency A] and I was being harassed by a supervisor who... I was on probation there and he kept saying, "Well, if you report me to anybody they're going to take my word over yours, I've been here 20 years." And he was married and he was just gross. And I was really young and I really wanted to be a cop and I didn't know what to do. And I had a boyfriend, I was telling him, he goes, "Well, why don't you do this? Why don't you that?" And I'm like, "Well, because I know what's going to happen. Then no one will hire me." So I didn't tell anybody. And I applied at [Agency B] and I got hired. And then after I got hired, I went to the chief [at Agency A] and I told him what this guy was doing. Nothing happened to him. [...] I should have sued the department. But at that point, in that era if you did that, you would never be a cop anywhere, no one would touch you, no one would hire you. And I just really wanted to do my job. And so I ended up leaving. And now I look back because it affected me so badly at the time.

Other participants shared Amy's fear of being labeled a "problem" or "trouble" and subsequently denied work. Amy's story in particular outlines new officers' vulnerability

to mistreatment due to their lack of organizational power. In Amy's case, she felt that she had made the right choice when her harasser did not face any consequences after she notified the chief of his behavior. Although not all harassers were supervisors, most participants believed that the agency leadership would protect the perpetrator over a female complainant.

This dynamic was exacerbated in sheriff's departments. Tina, 59, an officer from Louisiana, said, "in the sheriff's department there's no one to complain about the sheriff to, so I started looking for a way out." Participants who worked in sheriff's departments felt that they had little recourse within the agency if they were harassed or treated unfairly, especially if the sheriff himself was the perpetrator. Unlike municipal police agencies, where the city council or mayor can demand the leadership's resignation, agencies led by sheriffs are governed by elections. Of the seven participants who worked in sheriff's department, four mentioned that sheriffs were not incentivized to address issues of gender inequality, as doing so would not affect voting patterns.

While some female officers moved agencies in response to specific experiences of workplace inequality, others described this as a tactic for garnering higher wages or achieving a certain rank. For example, Laura, 56, an officer from California provided the following advice to new recruits: "I tell every new girl in my department: don't be afraid to move, always keep your eyes on the other departments." While some participants cautioned against moving agencies every few years, most saw it as an opportunity to advance and change work environments. While moving agencies was advantageous for individual women officers, this practice negatively impacts the experiences of women

who remain at the original agency. Martin and Jurik (2007) argued that, by quitting a police agency, female officers lower the overall representation of women at the agency, which reduces the remaining women's ability to achieve promotion and upholds the gendered status quo. Thus, while participants in this sample experienced positive results from moving agencies and encouraged other women to do the same, this practice perpetuates a situation in which workplace gender inequality is more severe at some agencies than others.

Response Three: Filing a Complaint or Lawsuit

The final response described by participants was also the least common by far. Only two participants in the sample described escalating complaints of harassment and discrimination to police chiefs or sheriffs or filing a lawsuit. Both were based in California. Erin, 58, recounted an experience of workplace sexual harassment that led her to file a complaint: "this guy just would not leave me alone, just saying awful things to me. So I lodged a complaint with the chief—and I was lucky because not all leaders are like this—but he dealt with it." When asked why she thought the chief took her complaint seriously, Erin said that "he was really forward-thinking and his wife was a cop." Erin's case underscores the uncertainty that women officers feel when deciding whether to report workplace harassment, as responses to complaints can vary by agency and even by chief or sheriff.

Janet, 53, the only participant who pursued legal action against her employer, was required to sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) in exchange for a monetary settlement. As Prasad (2018: 2515) explained,

> Once an NDA is signed by the parties, the penalty for breaking the contracted silence can be extremely high. An alleged victim may be forced to pay back not just the full amount of the settlement, but also an additional financial penalty and the other party's legal fees.

Thus, by speaking to me about her experience, Janet violated the rules of her settlement. She explained her decision to sue: "there was this captain who was really a problem for the women. We all got together and made a complaint. They investigated and nothing happened, so we decided to consult a lawyer. We won the suit." Janet and her coworkers came forward as a group to complain; by pooling their resources, they were able to pay the initial fee to hire a lawyer for their case. In this sample, making official complaints either within the agency or to external agencies such as the EEOC was rare, but participants who opted for this response were satisfied with the outcomes.

Currently, all police agencies have rules that forbid discrimination and harassment and have official channels for filing a report, as mandated by the Department of Justice. However, the culture of an agency plays an important role in whether women actually file a report. Laura, 56, an officer in California, said that the few women who came forward experienced "victim blaming," which "turned into an issue of asking for male attention, rather than what it was: harassment." Thus, the treatment of women officers who made formal complaints sent the implicit message that they would not be taken seriously by the leadership. Tina, 59, an officer in Louisiana, described the experience of a female coworker who was "iced out" by male colleagues after making an informal complaint

about sexually explicit jokes: “The guys would give her the cold shoulder, avoid her […] it would take forever for them to show up when she called for backup.” Even when women wish to report harassment or discrimination, agency policies may require reports to be submitted with the complainant’s name attached instead of anonymously or force them to wait for hours to file a complaint with a superior officer, who may attempt to dissuade them (National Institute of Justice 2019). Participants argue said that lodging a formal complaint “isn’t worth it,” as the complainant faces immediate negative consequences and the perpetrator almost never faces any consequences or consequences so minimal that they feel insulting to the victim.

Filing an official report or a lawsuit can be both personally and professionally costly. The cost of consulting with or hiring a lawyer can be a barrier for female officers who seek to pursue legal action. Some participants described fears that they would be “tainted” or labeled a “troublemaker” and that no other agency would hire them. Women who report workplace sexual harassment are more likely to experience negative bias from superiors, which impacts their career trajectory (Hart 2019). Rabe-Hemp (2018) documented instances of female officers who filed lawsuits and formal complaints for harassment and discrimination against their agency. This was never an easy process; in one case, a complainant was forced to describe her sex life in detail as part of the investigation into her allegations (Rabe-Hemp 2018). Others were challenged with fabricated counter-complaints that alleged that the complainant herself had sexually harassed a colleague (Rabe-Hemp 2018). Bonnes (2017) used the term “bureaucratic harassment” to refer to the ways in which men exploit existing policies and protocols in

an organization to harass and sanction women who report gender-based mistreatment. Furthermore, she argued, "Bureaucracy is central to this type of harassment as it is both the source of power and protection of the perpetrator *and* the tool that they use to harass co-workers or subordinates" (Bonnes 2017:808). In this sample, the lone participant who pursued legal action was joined by other women with similar complaints, which may have reduced the possible backlash (Martin and Jurik 2007). Studies have also suggested that bias toward victims of workplace sexual harassment may be reduced if a third-party witness reports the harassment instead (Hart 2019).

The perception that filing an official complaint entails a high cost for the victim and yields inadequate outcomes results is supported by two legal cases, both of which took place in Louisiana. In *McGehee v. City/Parish of E. Baton Rouge* (2001), a male officer was suspended for three days by his supervisor for making an offensive joke about a female coworker's breasts. His supervisor conducted an investigation and found that the officer's behavior violated department policy and gave him a suspension. The harasser appealed. The court agreed that the behavior was inappropriate, calling it "unprofessional conduct toward [the female officer], which could be characterized as sexual harassment." Nevertheless, his suspension was reduced from three days to one.

In another, more serious case, a male officer in a supervisory role repeatedly sexually harassed two women subordinates to the point where they called in sick to work to avoid working with him (*Charles v. New Orleans Police Dep't,* 2001). The decision included a summary of the women's testimonies:

> [Female officer] testified that [male officer] asked her to pretend he was not her supervisor, commented on her genitals, spoke about sexual exploits, and inquired

> about preferred sexual positions. Further, [male officer] invited her to visit his home, explaining that he 'walk[s] around the house naked' and described lewd acts. On a separate occasion, [male officer] put his arm around her and shook her, commenting that he was checking on his 'friends' while looking down [female officer's] shirt.

A female officer surreptitiously recorded one such interaction on her cell phone. Despite recorded evidence of the harassment found during the internal investigation and complaints from multiple women, the male officer appealed his demotion, claiming that it was too severe for a first offense. The court upheld the demotion and one-day suspension. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the male officer believed so strongly that his punishment was too severe that he appealed the decision in court.

Women tend to have more standing to force institutional change when they reach the higher ranks of police agencies, but few women achieve this. In municipal police departments (the group of agencies with the highest percentage of women overall), women comprise between 5% and 10% of lieutenants or sergeants and only 3% to 7% of captains or higher ranks (Rabe-Hemp 2018). However, levels of reported harassment have remained steady regardless of work assignment and in teams with both relatively low and high percentages of women (Brown and Heidensohn 2000). Similarly, reaching a certain rank does not protect women from experiencing harassment and discrimination from peers and subordinates (Silvestri 2007). Instead, McLaughlin et al. (2012) found that women experience more severe harassment when they work in male-dominated occupations, reach a level of authority, and are seen as un-womanly when they succeed at work.

In monetary terms, sexual harassment and discrimination are costly to employers. One study estimated that the United States Army spent over $250 million on legal costs, productivity-related losses, and administrative costs related to workplace sexual harassment in 1988 (Faley et al 1999). Police agencies also lose money due to employee turnover (Fry 1983). Furthermore, sexual harassment and discrimination contribute to workplace stress among women officers (Morash and Haarr 2005; Texeira 2002).

Conclusion

While women in many professions face harassment and discrimination at work, women in male-dominated occupations, such as police work, tend to face more outright hostility from their colleagues (Prokos and Padavic 2007; Remmington 1983). This chapter described the responses of female officers to workplace sexual harassment and discrimination. Each response was influenced by the larger structure and culture of the police agency, which constrain female officer's actions. Participants described three individual-level responses to gender-based harassment and discrimination in the workplace. Although these responses demonstrate agency and choice, it is vital to examine the structure and culture that constrain them.

This chapter provided novel insights in several areas. The first is the difficulty of finding and tracking officers and their experiences. While attempting to determine the prevalence of moving agencies as a response to harassment and discrimination, I discovered that this practice was coded as attrition in most surveys or large-scale datasets. This prevents researchers from determining the number of officers who leave one agency

for another and has two major ramifications: (1) women who move agencies to escape harassment and discrimination or in search of more gender-equitable policies are not quantified and (2) officers who commit harassment or abuse at police agencies can find work elsewhere and in many cases cannot be linked to their past behavior. Thus, creating a nationwide registry or licensing body that tracks individual police officers throughout their careers would address these issues. Moreover, it is difficult to find data on the prevalence and outcomes of sexual harassment complaints and lawsuits. This is partially due to the trend of "secret settlements," in which organizations benefit from the requirement that plaintiffs sign NDAs. Agencies themselves also directly obscure cases by maintaining confidentiality for internal disciplinary panels and records. Finally, the EEOC keeps all complaints confidential and only occasionally publishes decisions in aggregate. This chapter presented criticisms of secret settlements, but police agencies could also be required to publish the number and types of complaints made by employees in a given year to increase transparency.

Second, consent decrees are one tool that can drive diversity and inclusion in police agencies, but they are inconsistently applied. Consent decrees incentivize agencies to hire women and officers of color, but they do not require these agencies to retain or promote them. Although consent decrees are an imperfect tool, they still represent the best device currently used by the Department of Justice to hold police agencies accountable for wrongdoings. However, consent decrees and perceived support of the police are partisan issues, which have ramifications over time and for state politics. If the

federal government signals a relaxed stance on police abuse, then state and local governments will follow.

Finally, understandings of and responses to workplace sexual harassment, gender harassment, and discrimination vary by state. Participants responded to harassment and discrimination by choosing to endure them without reporting, moving agencies, or filing complaints and lawsuits. Female officers in Louisiana were more likely to pursue informal actions, while participants in California were more likely to make official complaints. Women in both states opted to move agencies. On average, officers in California are also paid a higher annual salary than officers in Louisiana: $101,380 versus $41,550 for patrol officers, respectively (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2018). This higher compensation suggests greater ability to hire a lawyer to pursue a legal claim.

The finding that participants in Louisiana were most likely to pursue informal actions is unsurprising. Louisiana is a politically conservative state and has a relatively large number of small agencies called parish sheriff's offices. Participants described the difficulty of filing complaints in an agency led by a sheriff because sheriffs are elected; since sexual harassment or discrimination within a department is unlikely to be a major driver of votes, it is largely unnoticed. Protections against different forms of harassment for employees also vary by state. Harassment and discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation are both explicitly outlawed in California, but neither is legally protected in Louisiana. However, a recent decision by the Supreme Court (*Bostock v. Clayton County*) affirmed that Title VII protections cover discrimination based on sexual and gender identity.

Additionally, while unions play an important role in protecting workers from harassment and discrimination in most sectors, this is not the case for police unions. Although they are instrumental in advocating for fair pay, benefits, and working conditions, police unions also routinely seek to limit disciplinary actions for officers who have engaged in misconduct and ensure that disciplinary hearings and decisions remain sealed (Walker 2008). These actions effectively prevent many attempts to introduce civilian oversight, accountability measures, and other reforms. Most publicly, they protect officers who use excessive force on members of the public, but they also enable known harassers to find work at other agencies without being accompanied by their record of behavior. Among unions, police unions are also unique in their public backing of Republican politicians. Similarly, Republican politicians, who tend to oppose the right to unionize, have vocally defended the existence and decisions of police unions (Barron-Lopez 2020). This link between police unions and Republican politics further thwarts efforts to introduce institutional changes that would benefit women, officers of color, and LGBTQIA officers.

Although many women experience workplace sexual harassment and discrimination, they rarely unite and organize as a response. Agencies in which harassment and discrimination occur perpetuate bad behaviors by engendering a fear of reporting and subsequent retaliation, incentivizing high-performing women to move to another agency, and silencing women who do file official complaints and lawsuits. Although professional networks can be established to support women officers in the workplace, women officers in the United States have been slow to adopt this response.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

Significance

Recently, the #MeToo movement has brought necessary attention to the otherwise taken for granted ways in which women are harassed and discriminated against at work. However, the gender inequality experienced by women police officers has failed to gain public attention and remains understudied among academics. Women in male-dominated occupations, such as women police officers, are more likely than women in more gender-balanced or female-dominated workplaces to experience workplace sexual harassment (Gruber 1998).

Scholars and professional associations of women police officers have continued to advocate for the diversification of policing along gender and racial lines, but the number of women police officers has stagnated since the early 2000s (Reaves 2015). This conflicts with the popularity of criminology and criminal justice programs in colleges and universities, where women represent a high percentage of students (Rossler et al 2020). Furthermore, police agencies continue to claim that they experience staffing shortages and difficulty hiring new recruits (BJS 2018; Jordan et al 2009), but they are largely unwilling to engage in institutional change to make themselves more appealing to a wide pool of candidates. These efforts should include comprehensive parental leave policies, a more inclusive workplace culture, and greater transparency in hiring and promotion.

Since the advent of the cell phone camera, recordings of misbehavior on the part of police officers have become increasingly common. They have been accompanied by growing calls for police reform and even the abolition of police. However, the dynamic

that draws the most criticism is police misbehavior toward members of the public rather than within agencies themselves. Along with the scope and impact of inequitable police treatment of residents, more research is needed on how inequities unfold and persist within departments. Such inequities have direct consequences for women officers, LGBTQIA officers, and officers of color and are likely to be related to other inequities in policing.

Theoretical Contributions

This project contributes to the fields of gender, work, and the criminal justice system by examining the inequalities faced by women, including women of color and lesbian women, who work in the justice system. This dissertation represents the first study to examine the ways in which structure, culture, and individual agency shape women officers' experiences of workplace gender inequality in two states, Louisiana and California. I gathered data through semi-structured interviews with current and recently retired women police officers to explore how they experience and understand their gendered workplace. By examining institutional gender inequality at three levels, this study advances the literature by shedding light on the ways in which discrimination and harassment simultaneously occur in multiple forms. Each empirical chapter in this dissertation examined one of these levels: structure, culture, and individual agency.

By illuminating how the structure of police agencies reinforces workplace gender inequality, I substantiate past research and contribute new findings. I found evidence for existing explanations of gendered structural factors at play in police agencies, including

the paramilitary structure's disproportionate negative impact on women officers (Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce 2010; Sass and Troyer 1999), the use of exclusionary hiring criteria such as physical fitness tests (Britton 2011; Rabe-Hemp 2018; Sass and Troyer 1999), and the persistent pay disparity between male and female officers (Luo, Schleifer, and Hill 2019). This project also builds on existing research by considering the role of location in women officers' experiences of structural inequality. For example, participants in Louisiana were more accepting of the paramilitary structure of policing, while women officers in California were openly critical of it and, when promoted, employed a collaborative leadership styles. The Louisiana sample was also more likely to have entered police work after prior experience in a branch of the military, and participants in the more racially diverse California sample were more likely to have been hired by an agency under an active consent decree. Although a consent decree is a legal tool that is used to encourage diversity in hiring, it is not a panacea, as participants also described a cycle in which agencies are incentivized to hire women and candidates of color but fail to subsequently retain or promote them.

My research also provides novel insight on the ways in which cultural forms of gender inequality permeate police agencies. I make three new contributions. First, past research has considered the ways in which women officers address their conflicting roles as police officers and mothers (Langan et al 2017; Martin 1991; Schulze 2011; Rabe-Hemp 2018). I found that being a mother impacts an officer's approach to her work. Participants who identified as mothers reported experiencing greater distress over cases that involved children than before they became parents, but traditional gendered logic in

police agencies leads women to be funneled into roles that involve children and victims of crime. Second, I found that participants who work in sheriff's departments experienced higher rates of blocked progression than those in municipal police departments. While municipal police departments are often accountable to the mayor or city council, sheriffs are elected and do not have the same checks and balances that can help to reduce discriminatory practices.

Finally, participants of color in the sample reported a unique form of emotional labor that was not required of white female coworkers and male coworkers of color: the expectation that they would act as a translator when colleagues engaged with non-native English-speaking members of the community. This work is both gendered and racialized. Indeed, past research has found that women officers are required to engage in more emotional labor than their male colleagues (Miller 1999; Rabe-Hemp 2018), while officers of color are often assigned to areas populated by members of their racial group (Collins 1993; Palmiotto et al 2006). This study also reinforces previous findings that women officers experience gendered task assignments (Miller 1999; Morash and Haarr 2012; Palmiotto et al 2006), gender and sexual harassment (Hunt 1990; Jacobs 1987; Martin 1980; Remmington 1983), and biases and stereotypes based on their gender (Jurik 1988; Kanter 1977; Martin 1980).

Furthermore, this study builds on past research by illuminating the ways in which women police officers respond to harassment at work. Participants described three main types of responses: pursuing informal actions, transferring to another police agency, and filing an official complaint with the agency or a lawsuit. The current data does not

adequately capture the numbers of police officers who moved to another agency. Instead, all cases in which officers leave an agency (even if they are hired elsewhere) are coded as attrition. This prevents researchers from determining the prevalence of transfers and enables officers who may have been fired or suspended to move to another agency without being followed by their disciplinary record. In this study, participants in both Louisiana and California were equally likely to move to another agency in response to workplace harassment and discrimination. The prevalence of moving agencies and pursuing informal actions in response to harassment is consistent with past findings (Fry 1983; Jacobs 1989; Martin and Jurik 2007).

Finally, I found that understandings of and responses to gender harassment and sexual harassment and discrimination vary by location. Participants in Louisiana were most likely to employ humor or reframe incidents as less severe and therefore unworthy of reporting or filing a complaint about. This may be due to the state's more conservative political environment, the lack of state protections against all forms of harassment and discrimination, and comparatively low pay, which makes workers dependent on their paychecks and without the financial means to retain counsel.

Policy Recommendations

In line with the tenet of using scholarship to advocate for changes that benefit women in feminist research, I include several policy suggestions based on the data gathered in this project. The first, which is discussed in detail in the chapter on individual agency, is to create a central body that licenses police officers, similar to the current

standard for doctors and teachers. I suggest this for two major reasons. Without a central body, researchers cannot determine the number of police officers who move agencies in a given year. This data is critical for estimating the prevalence of women who move agencies to avoid harassment and discrimination and thus identifying "problem" police agencies with a high turnover. Identifying such agencies would allow scholars and organizational leaders to better understand how and why some agencies have more gender inequities than others. As a reform, collecting data on the trajectories of individual officers is also in line with movements for racial justice, as some officers who are notorious for misbehavior toward the public had been identified as having issues at a previous employer but were still able to continue working at a different agency. Similarly, several professional bodies have explicit codes of conduct and implement ongoing training and other requirements as part of an individual's regular license renewal.

Second, police agencies—and, I would argue, all governmental agencies—should end the practice of using NDAs as part of work contracts and as a contingency for the settlements of lawsuits. The use of NDAs in lawsuits filed by current and former employees conceals the prevalence and severity of harassment and discrimination in an agency. It is also worth noting that taxpayer funds are used in these "secret settlements" due to the statute of qualified immunity, which prevents police officers from being personally sued for many types of harmful activities while at work (Urbonya 1989). Because public funds are used to settle these suits, the public should have the right to view legal records and exhibits related to settlements.

The experiences of participants also demonstrate that harassment and discrimination are still common in police agencies. To solve this issue, I recommend the following changes. The highest-level change would be to mandate that all police agencies should be accountable to a citizen review board that includes a mix of appointed and elected members who are unaffiliated with the police agency. Some municipal police departments already have such a review board, but it lacks the authority to make substantial changes or conduct full investigations in many cases, which limits its effectiveness (Ferdik, Rojek, and Alpert 2013). Using Walker's (2000) schema of citizen review boards, I advocate for a Class I system in which the board has substantial access to police agency records, is responsible for investigating and adjudicating citizen complaints, and has the authority to demand changes in the agency.

Once these independent review boards are in place, they should assume full responsibility for allegations of harassment and discrimination. Under the current system, complaints are kept confidential within the police agency. In smaller departments, they must be made to the employee's superior officer, even if that person is the subject of the complaint (Bonnes 2017). Giving an independent body control over these complaints would also increase the likelihood of unbiased investigations and officers' trust in the likelihood of an institutional response. Similarly, harassment and discrimination based on a victim's race, gender, sexual identity, and other protected categories should be evaluated and addressed differently than other behaviors that agencies deem worthy of discipline (e.g., unexcused absences). This would enable these forms of workplace misbehavior to result in explicit and escalating consequences for repeat offenders.

Moreover, in the interest of transparency, police agencies should be required to publish the number of complaints related to workplace harassment and discrimination in a given year.

To ensure the retention and promotion of women officers, police agencies should develop and implement strict rubrics to make promotional decisions and enforce equal treatment of all candidates, a practice that is already in effect for many federal government employees. As part of this change, it is important to meaningfully consider the ways in which existing rubrics may unfairly advantage white candidates and male candidates. Some countries have attempted to use other alternatives to increase the number of women in supervisory positions in police agencies. For example, in the United Kingdom, some agencies have adopted the practice of "direct entry," in which women candidates for managerial positions can be hired from a field other than policing (Silvestri 2018). While these efforts are not without their issues, they would improve the existing gender imbalance.

The final recommendation is to remove police education from police academies and make it a specialized degree offered by colleges and universities (Roberg and Bonn 2004). Although higher education institutions are also sites of inequality, this change would align policing with other specialized fields and ensure that courses are subject to administrative oversight and review. Breadth courses and/or courses focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion could be mandated as part of these degrees. This practice is already used in other countries, such as Iceland (Fekjær and Peterssen 2020).

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The current project is not without its limitations. The most notable is the small sample size. This occurred due to restrictions on funding, the changing political climate, and the coronavirus pandemic. To strengthen the validity of the findings, I could revisit the chosen sites to resume recruiting and increase the study's sample size. I could also use the same methodology in a new location, where I may have more success recruiting participants. In addition, the samples were not representative of the average woman officer in each state, partly because both samples skewed older due to my reliance on retired women as gatekeepers and initial contacts for recruitment. The Louisiana sample was also not racially representative, as 9 out of 10 participants identified as white. Again, this is likely due to the chosen sampling method, as white women are more likely to have friends who are also white women and are therefore likely to refer participants from their own racial group. Future research could replicate this analysis with a larger and more representative sample. One way to do so would be to identify women of color as initial contacts ahead of time to increase the likelihood of non-white women being referred to the study.

Another limitation was the comparison of only two locations in the United States. This was especially noticeable in the discussion about officers moving agencies in response to harassment and discrimination; both California and Louisiana have a relatively high density of police agencies. Therefore, it would be interesting to examine responses among women officers in more rural areas with a lower density of police

agencies. Future research could also expand the comparison to other U.S. regions, such as the Northeast and the Midwest, and other countries with a similar policing system.

Future research could also help to fill the knowledge gaps identified in this project. For example, there is no available comprehensive nationwide data on the prevalence and severity of workplace sexual harassment and discrimination in police agencies. The use of more subjective criteria in interviews, psychological exams, and background checks to exclude women applicants from police work also warrants further study. There is also no statewide data and, in many cases, no agency-wide data on currently employed officers by both gender and race, which severely limits researchers' ability to identify inequalities in police organizations. Finally, future research could clarify the prevalence of NDAs in the settlement of harassment and discrimination suits filed by women police officers and officers of color.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Guide: Gendered Inequality within Police Agencies

Gender:

Age:

Race:

Sexual Orientation/Identity:

Relationship Status:

Are you a Parent:

If so, number of children and age of children:

Highest Level of Education:

Job title:

Length of service:

Entry

1. Tell me about how you became a police officer.
2. What made you want to be a police officer?
    a. Did you know anyone who works in policing? How did that affect your decision?
3. How did you decide which agency to apply to?
    a. Did you know anybody in your department/agency before you joined?
    b. How did that make an impact on the choice of agency?

4. Describe the application process you went through at your agency (and other agencies if applicable).
5. Describe the hiring process you went through at your agency.
6. Tell me about the training you received upon being hired:
    a. Describe the formal training you received
    b. Describe the on-the-job training you received
7. Tell me about your first day of work.
8. Did you have a mentor during your first few years?
    a. Describe your mentor.
    b. How did you end up being mentored by them?
9. How did you think about policing before you joined?
    a. Were your ideas/images true?
10. How would you describe your work/life balance?
    a. (*If applicable*) Has getting married affected your relationship to your work? How?
    b. (*If applicable*) Has your work affected your relationship with your partner? How?
        i. *Is your partner supportive of your work? Of you being an officer?*
    c. (*If applicable*) Has becoming a parent affected your relationship to your work? How?

d. (*If applicable*) Has your work affected your relationship with your children? How?

   i. *What do your children think of you being an officer?*

e. Room for probing here on division of labor and other family responsibilities

11. (*If applicable*) Are you 'out' at work?

Structure/Culture

12. If you had to describe your department/agency to someone in a few sentences what would you say?
    a. How about your unit/assignment?
13. What would you say is your favorite part of your agency/department?
    a. How about your unit/assignment?
14. What would you say is your least favorite part of your agency/department?
    a. How about your unit/assignment?
15. How would you describe your pay and benefits?
    a. How do you feel about your pay/your benefits?
16. Many scholars describe police agencies as having a paramilitary structure: how would you respond to that?
17. How would you describe the culture in your department/agency?
18. Do you wear a uniform at work?
    a. How do you feel about your uniform?
19. How frequently are you the only woman in a room or on a team?

a. *Woman of color? (and your race specifically)*

b. *Lesbian?*

20. How would you describe interactions with most male colleagues to be?

21. Can you think of a time in particular where interactions with a male colleague was strained?

    a. Why was that?

22. Have these interactions will colleagues gotten better over time?

    a. Why/Why not?

23. How would you describe interactions with most female colleagues to be?

24. Can you think of a time in particular where interactions with a female colleague was strained?

    a. Why was that?

25. Have these interactions with colleagues gotten better over time?

    a. Why/Why not?

26. How would you describe interactions with most gay/lesbian colleagues to be?

    a. *Can you think of a time in particular where interactions with a lesbian/gay colleague was strained?*

        i. Why was that?

    b. *Have these interactions will colleagues gotten better over time?*

        i. *Why/Why not?*

27. How would you describe interactions with most heterosexual/straight colleagues to be?

a. *Can you think of a time in particular where interactions with a heterosexual/straight colleague was strained?*
    i. *Why was that?*
b. *Have these interactions will colleagues gotten better over time?*
    i. *Why/Why not?*

28. How would you describe interactions with Black/Latina/Asian colleagues to be?
    a. *Can you think of a time in particular where interactions with a colleague of color was strained?*
        i. *Why was that?*
    b. *Have these interactions will colleagues gotten better over time?*
        i. *Why/Why not?*
29. How would you describe interactions with most White colleagues to be?
    a. *Can you think of a time in particular where interactions with a white colleague was strained?*
        i. *Why was that?*
    b. *Have these interactions will colleagues gotten better over time?*
        i. *Why/Why not?*
30. How would you describe interactions with your boss or bosses?
    a. Does this vary based on whether your boss is a man or a woman
    b. *Does this vary based on whether your boss is white or a person of color?*
    c. *Does this vary based on whether your boss is straight or gay?*
31. Can you think of a time in particular where interactions with a boss was strained?

a. Why was that?

32. How do you think age impacts your relationships with colleagues?

    a. With Bosses/Superiors?

    b. (*If applicable*) with subordinates?

33. Are you friends with your colleagues?

    a. Do you meet outside of work time?

    b. Do you feel you spend a lot of time with them?

    c. Why/Why not?

    d. Do you tend to be friendlier with colleagues who are also women?

    e. *Do you tend to be closer with colleagues who are also gay?*

    f. *Do you tend to be closer with colleagues who are also people of color? (and your race)*

34. (*If applicable*) How would you describe your management/supervisory style?

    a. Did you pick this up along the way?

    b. Was there anyone who influenced your style? (Past mentors/bosses)

Agency

35. Would you say you have a certain persona you put on while at work?

    a. Describe that persona (use an example)

    b. Do you ever feel you need to act in a certain way while at work?

36. Do you feel that there are stereotypes about women in your workplace? If so, what are they?

    a. Do you ever worry about being compared to these stereotypes?

   b. Do these stereotypes affect how you act at work? How?

37. How much of your personal input is incorporated at work?
    a. Do you feel that your opinion is valued?
38. How much freedom do you have at work to push back against decisions you don't agree with?
    a. Describe a time this has happened.
39. Do you feel that your gender impacts your treatment at work by colleagues or superiors?
    a. How?
    b. *If yes,* how do you handle that?
40. Do you feel that your race (or being White) impacts your treatment at work by colleagues or superiors?
    a. *How?*
    b. *If yes, how do you handle that?*
41. Do you feel that your sexual orientation impacts your treatment at work by colleagues or superiors?
    a. *How?*
    b. *If yes, how do you handle that?*
42. Do you feel that there is a bias against you as a woman, lesbian woman, woman of color at work? *If so, how do you handle that bias?*
43. Have you ever felt that someone at work set you up to fail? Describe that for me.
    a. *How do you respond/react to these experiences? (collective/individual)*

44. Have you ever experienced unwanted flirting or sexual advances from a coworker? Describe that for me.
    a. *How do you respond/react to these experiences? (collective/individual)*
45. Have you ever experienced name-calling or being called vulgar or derogatory words while at work? Describe that for me.
    a. *How do you respond/react to these experiences? (collective/individual)*
46. Are you unionized at work?
    a. Have you used your union as a resource in solving disputes or dealing with unequal treatment?

Movement

47. Track your tenure in policing for me.
    c. What units did you work in?
    d. In what order?
    e. For how long?
    f. Why did you leave?
    g. Was it a lateral move or a promotion?
48. Were you/are you able to join the unit that interests you most?
    h. …the unit you most want to be a part of?
49. Would you say that your movement up the ladder/hierarchy was fair?
    i. Did you get turned down for promotion more than once?
    j. Were others promoted over you? Why?

50. How did you end up in the role you currently perform?

51. (If applicable) What led to your decision to retire?